The Sanctimonious Pandemic

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Chapter one
Gloomy reminiscences

Even though the world had changed a lot during the late centuries, autumn always seemed to be an unchangeable phenomenon that stole nature's life power every single year. Not even the harmless leaf trees could keep their exuberance. The weather was getting colder which ensured that every single child-leaf got blown far away from its mother-tree. This is autumn, as its naturalistic and kind of sad essence – as the dark period of goodbyes.

It was evening and a curly-haired man, Ludilo Peono, was sitting in front of a warm campfire. By hand, he caught an orange maple leaf that had got divorced from its tree and was flying in the wind towards him. The man took a look at this orphaned leaf that had never even touched the ground. The leaf was like Ludilo himself due to the facts that neither of them was decomposed to dust and neither of them had any parents who you could trust when the times were tough.

It had been already thirteen years since it was *that* autumn. That autumn, Ludilo was only a seven-year-old boy. On that autumn evening, he got the idea to become a vampire hunter because his parents got brutally drained dry. Only some short and gloomy reminiscences of that evening had remained in sergeant Peono's memory. But even if there were not many clear memories, he would remember every single of the horror events forever.

Young Ludilo was happily playing in the living room with his new red Ferrari toy when suddenly, some weird voices began to bawl. It was like a loud pterosaur or an angry hag would have been hurt by something that was very agonizing. Our young boy soon realized these voices did not come from the ongoing television news. How could the broad-minded newsreader have made such horrible noises? Perhaps it was just mom and dad violently arguing again in the kitchen? This suggestion being the most likely one, Ludilo made a decision to interrupt his car play for a while. Next, he went to the kitchen where, unfortunately, much worse things than a marriage fight emerged. The parents were lying on the floor covered in blood and surrounded by some strange pale-faced creatures. Then, for some reason, the child wanted to start throwing dishes.

Soon the distraught boy realized he was in a forest on some scar-faced stranger's lap. "Drink this Orthodox Christian holy water! It only protects you so just drink it!" told this guy who seemed to be a vampire hunter. Ludilo drank as fast as he was crying at the moment. He felt like his body was burning inside and this was actually the last thing he nowadays was able to remember about the events.

Sergeant Peono creased the maple leaf like it would have been admail and threw it in the campfire. After a few seconds, the leaf's color resembled a lot like the hue of his curly hairdo. The man opened his pocket flask and sipped

some tasty cognac. But suddenly, of course, the wind changed its direction just at that bad moment. Thus, our unlucky vampire hunter got a huge smoke cloud from the campfire right into his green-colored eyes and began to cough like a smoker joker.

"Motherfucking smoke! You think that smarting my eyes is a good way to make me smarter?!" shouted Ludilo and stood up. "Not that I'd expect anything but could I at least have a single sip without any damn thing having to bully me like that?"

At the very moment Ludilo's pale, long, orange-haired, bespectacled girlfriend Beleta Damo arrived. She said: "So… Here are the sausages you asked me to bring. By the way, what are you shouting here, dear? What's wrong with you? Are you crying?"

Even Ludilo himself did not actually know was he "crying" because of smoke or because of his sad memories. However, he decided to answer: "Just got some nasty smoke in my eyes, nothing else… So, you brought the meat already? Great! Let's grill now!"

"I can see you're a little upset. What's wrong? Were you grieving about something? Gross things from your past again?" asked Beleta in a concerned way but the man was just mute like a stone as he was setting a sausage to a stick. The only things to hear at the moment were campfire's and sausage packages' crackling but soon this distressing silence was killed by a loud ring tone.

"This is Ludilo Peono. Oh hi, Amikino, pal!"

"Man! Have you totally forgotten that IVEO's mission starts in a quarter-hour?"

"Oh damn! How did I forget? I'll be right there! Just wait a minute or two!"

"Well, you should hurry if you don't wanna get a salary degradation by our captain! See ya!"

Amikino was Ludilo's workmate. The face of fair-haired, hook-nosed Amikino vanished from the screen and the videophone call was over. Ludilo folded his old, shell-styled mobile phone, put it in his pocket and soon noticed Beleta's expression. Her brown eyes alone already sent the message about the man's abrupt side quest while they were vehemently reflecting the campfire's flashing.

"My apologies", regretted the vampire hunter as he lifted the water bucket. "You know… What a horrible night to have a task like this… I was hoping so much we could have spent some time here together in the heart of nature. If I only remembered the things at my work, I wouldn't have… I…"

"Work, work, work..." sighed Beleta Damo. "You just never seem to care about anything else but your horrible work."

The flames hissed like a viper when Ludilo killed them with soiled water. When the last droplets were tipped down, only the autumn's darkness, two dismal auras and a disgusting smell of smoke were left among the lovers.

Chapter two
Piece of cake

Ludilo picked up his gear at the International Vampire Eliminating Organization headquarters, the IVEO HQ. After this, he drove straight to the Veneno woods where the tonight's mission was about to start. Luckily, the place was not in a foreign city, so he was only about twenty minutes late, which was not much after all.

The battle equipment was put on in a huge rush and thus all the front buttons were still open, the trousers were maliciously puckered and the silver bullets were totally forgotten at the base. But thank God, at least our hero remembered to take his silver saber, solarium lamp and the other important items with him. Still, Ludilo was mumbling to himself that he was not an exemplary sergeant at all.

The mumbling had an introspective point since, for example, captain Ĉevalo always had to tell the vampire hunter to shorten his long hairdo. And that was not the only reason for the bad mood. Our scoundrel also used to disobey the orders he simply didn't like. He also drank cognac during the work time and swore like a devil almost every minute. So the bad mood had lots of spiritual roots.

Anyway, the point was now that Ludilo was in the right place at the right time. So even if someone was about to complain about something, how bad could it be? Our sergeant could easily stand everything. And so, he just parked the car, tried to button up his jacket a little and ran to the other hunters who were bored because of all this purposeless waiting.

"Some sergeant you are!" bantered the perfectionist buddy Amikino Turo who had also been promoted to the rank of sergeant a couple of months ago. He had a fair hair style, dense eyebrows, dark-colored eyes and a hook nose. As Ludilo's "battle buddy", he had taken part in many exciting adventures and the couple's morale was limitlessly good when fighting vampires.

"Oh shuddup, Mrs! You're talking to a guy who achieved the serge rank before you!" shouted our overdue hunter as a facetious answer. "Let's just rehearse tonight's things and all that mission stuff..."

"Alright! Teams five and six! Attention!" shouted Amikino to two hunter groups who the sergeants were supposed to march into a battle against the wood's vampires. After the sound of dozens of heels hitting together the two teams of three-lined, silver clothed hunters were ready to listen.

"Okay, so we're finally ready to begin exploring the Veneno woods and catch up with the others! Hopefully, they haven't killed all the vampires and we also can have some action!" declared Ludilo and after that, Amikino continued: "And don't let your guards down because this is a semi-difficult mission after all! Losing your concentration is the worst thing to do since there are hundreds of blood suckers in this forest of poisonous plants.

Remember that this is the largest refuge the Polurourbo's vampires have had in a while. Also keep in mind the civilians' safety in case we encounter them! Like usually, erase the memories by using the MED!"

The civilians' memory erasing and editing was one of the most important but also the toughest duties of a vampire hunter. By that, the hunters tried to keep the vampires as hidden as possible to avoid chaos among mankind. Every vampire hunter was equipped with a hi-tech Memory Erasing Device, also known as MED, which was used to do this job. But however, the calculator-looking device was completely useless if the civilian was in a total panic. In this kind of bad situations, the device also had another name, MErDe, which is French and means excrement. Polurourbo was a city with pure lights-out-humor but Ludilo and Amikino both still lived in it.

"Chop chop! Form yourselves in a line, let's go!" shouted Ludilo Peono. The two sergeants and their subaltern hunter team members proceeded further and further to the woods without any signs of fear.

They navigated many miles searching for those blood suckers but nothing special was found. In some places some mutilated and sliced vampire corpses were seen so that could only have meant that the other hunter teams had already searched these places. It was almost eleven o'clock and the night was becoming so dark that the solarium lamps were turned on to better the visibility. The terrain had become exceedingly rough and only owls' hooting broke the nature's silence.

"Attention! We'll now have a break. Fifteen minutes and then we move on again!" ordered Ludilo after an hour was passed without any action. He had a quick nip of his cognac and walked towards Amikino. "Now that I remember it, I forgot my silver ammo at the base. You have any extra bullets for me?"

"You'll get one fired in your head if you don't stop asking me to lend you things all the time", answered sergeant Amikino Turo in a bad but humorous way and gave a small package. The other hunters including Ludilo found this line funny and began to laugh like Jokers. Amikino was a master of black humor. People at IVEO believed no one could ever allege the opposite of this fact.

Too bad the laughing ceased when a hunter fellow screamed out of the blue. The yelling was followed by a couple of shot sounds and the squad soon realized a vampire strike was going on. Everyone took up their weapons. The break time was over.

"Oh God help us, now they are here!" yelled one corporal but she sounded nothing like she would have been afraid of anything. Maybe she just had her own style of sarcasm or something when mentioning "God" this way. Everyone had started to fight against these dangerous attackers. The true battle event was ongoing and the sounds of war were echoing everywhere.

Ludilo also noticed a vampire right behind him. In that situation, the bullet package was dropped down by the hunter. There was no time for reloading any guns or rifles. Ludilo quickly drew his silver saber and slashed twice. The first slash missed but the second luckily hit the chest so hard the pale-faced enemy fell down. It was a bit weird since, normally, vampires died only if the head was completely cut or shot off. But perhaps this individual just happened to be a weaker one who was not able to bear a single blade slash.

"Are they seriously even trying?" asked Amikino after shooting his fifth blood sucker. "It's almost like they don't even smell our iron juice."

But truthfully, the blood was what caused the vampires to arrive and there was no doubt about it. At least Ludilo knew no other reasons than that. So he took his dropped bullets, reloaded his rifle and began to strum the trigger like an ADHD man. Well, not really that aggressively, because there were only fifty bullets in the package. It was better to prefer the focused fighting style, with a saber and a rifle, over the squandered one.

However, the small box of bullets was actually enough for the battle. It was a kind of huge surprise Ludilo needed to fire only about twenty shots and the dangerous situation was already over. There weren't any vampires alive but everyone was still prepared for a new strike. Like they say, peace means only to reloading the guns. The hunters kept searching every direction for possible threats but found nothing with their bright solarium lamps. Finally, since nothing really was found, the few numbered, injured people were sent to the hospital and the hunters proceeded further with their exciting mission.

After thirty minutes of walking passed with no action, Ludilo was contacted by a captain via radio phone. Amikino was also listening to the call near his fellow and burnished his pocket revolver a bit.

"This is captain Ĉevalo calling sergeant Peono! What is the situation there? Report!"

"Captain, sir! Sergeant Peono! Units five and six have been under an attack at Veneno area 34B but everything's clear now. There haven't been any signs of civilians. Number of injured is three and no one has died. It's been silent for the last thirty minutes but we'll keep searching like we are ordered to."

"You don't need to. It would be a kind of wasted effort since the vampires are so weak everywhere in this forest. Just return to the base. This mission was not challenging enough for the sixteen units of you. Only two or three teams would have been necessary for this. Just wondering what causes these bloodthirsty creatures to weaken… It's like an unknown factor is draining their strength."

"I agree, sir! One of what I just eliminated died by a single saber slash, I'll tell you that."

"Really?! That’s hard to believe but anyway… I order units five and six to return! Nine and ten will take care of everything and ensure that not even a single individual remains in Veneno. We’ll be okay."

"Roger!"

"And one thing I really do mind: that long hair of yours! Over!"

The phone call was over. Amikino took up his MED and fretted the dummy challenge level a bit. "It's hard to believe this device wasn't needed at all", he said. "The mission was way too easy so I'd suggest a special mission where we could put this gadget in good use."

"I'd say yeah to any challenging good-salary-task but what could that be then?" asked Ludilo while putting away the radio phone.

"Just thought we could erase your and the captain's memory so that he'll *cut out the crap*! Whoa wait, wait, wait! Just calm down! Your hairdo is just fine! Don't tell me you can't take a little joke! Your hair is not crap, fine!"

"Really hope you choose your words better in the future... especially when it comes to my style!"

And thus, the two hunter groups left the forest, wondering what could have caused the sudden weakening of these vampires.

Chapter three
Kooky geek

The next morning Ludilo slept very tight until his mobile phone rang. He slowly got up, rubbed his eyes, yawned very sweetly, took his phone from the nightstand and finally answered the video call. It was Beleta Damo.

"Oh good day, honey!" greeted Beleta in a happy way. But soon she noticed the shirtless sergeant's troll hair and continued: "Or should I say… good morning?"

"Morning... What is it, chick? I mean… what's the time?" mumbled Ludilo in a tired way.

"It's almost 1:00 PM. Oh, poor man… You must have had a very troublesome and tiring mission last night, right?"

"No... Piece of cake."

"Oh… but… Since when have you used to sleep for so long? Are you sure you're not overdoing it?"

"I dunno but... I've got some duty officer's work tonight..."

"Oh, so you're like in a night shift? But anyway… Shall we go to the new café that was opened a couple of days ago? You know… I actually don't really like any sort of camping pastime like you do. On second thought, it doesn't matter at all that our last night didn't go like we planned."

"Fine… Let's go to the café then."

"Yeah! Is it okay if I first come there and then we go by your car?"

"Yes, see you!"

"See you, Lully! I'll be there in ten minutes or something."

After the call Ludilo dressed up, went to the toilet, urinated, brushed his teeth and then before doing his hair he stopped to stare at the mirror. He finally noticed how his reflecting image resembled a lot like some sort of funky troll. The hair was so tangled and the beard hadn't been shaven in the last days, for example. Well, maybe the beard-stubbles should be shaven tomorrow since the man had many times noticed how his girlfriend liked to have rough things on her skin. So, in order to fix the problems, our sergeant finally decided to just do his hair and never mind the spiky beard.

Beleta Damo was a quite graceful, orange-haired librarian who was usually wearing black or red clothes. Perhaps she was the perfect opposite of our sergeant. For the first time it was at the civic library of Polurourbo when Ludilo met her. At the time, our hunter was studying healthcare sciences alongside his work at IVEO. He needed some information about cardiovascular diseases and got helped by Beleta. The pair soon realized how nicely they kept talking to each other and… You can imagine the rest of the story yourself.

Ludilo had just enough time to tidy up before the doorbell rang. He opened the door, greeted his lady, put on his leather jacket and then the pair stepped

outside the row house. They walked into the red, old, cheap, rusty Ford parked in the courtyard. Beleta might have expected some explanations for this kind of low-quality conveyance but her "Lully" just kept explaining how this vehicle always passed the inspection with no problems.

"Um… Where exactly was that Kafesota again?" asked our driver while starting up the car.

"It’s near the health center. First you drive past the bowling alley and then you just turn left." explained Beleta and belted up herself.

"Oh of course! Now I remember."

"And by the way, it’s Kafotaso."

"Oh yeah! That’s that."

It was obvious that sergeant Peono wasn't any sort of prince but thank God Miss Damo rarely found herself driven completely mad because of him. A regular woman sure would nag all the time about every possible stumble unlike Beleta. Thinking so, Ludilo was grateful that his unique partner often resembled a compassionate angel.

It didn't take much time to arrive to the café. But finding an empty parking spot did. Either the café was huger than expected or it was tiny and just overrated because of the high numbered adverts that could be seen all over the city. These Kafotaso adverts were even on the local buses' sides. And thus, the second suggestion might have been more probable. Why make a mountain out of molehill? It's a small café, not a restaurant! After the pre-agony it sure will get less and less customers and finally end up in concurs because no one cares to visit this coffee cottage. Did they think they could keep advertising for an eternity or something?

The couple finally entered this little piece of fool's gold. The smells of freshly baked cookies and pastries were quite lovely. The average amount of twenty round wood tables had neat, rose-colored tablecloths. Almost a half hundred customers had thronged themselves in this place and kept babbling like jukeboxes. The walls had been decorated with various, comely landscape paintings. The queue's length was approximately twenty feet but luckily it wasn't slow.

After a couple of minutes Ludilo ordered a typical and cheap "donut plus coffee" for himself and Beleta. They chose the last table that was still unreserved. It was in a dark corner but that didn't matter at all.

"Oh dear... Shall you at least take the spoon out of the cup before drinking?" commented Beleta politely when our long-haired sergeant slurped his coffee incongruously.

"You heard the miss, hippie man!" yelled someone from the next table so loudly that Ludilo got a bit scared and almost choke in the coffee he was drinking. Almost half of the cup spilled onto the tablecloth. Some of the other customers watched inquisitively when the sergeant just kept coughing and

coughing. Ludilo didn't care and turned to watch who was this freak yelling at him.

A bald, thirty-year-old, hook-nosed, spectacled nerd in a black jacket, having dense eyebrows and even denser moustache, walked towards Ludilo. Our vampire hunter recognized the person was Oruto Nikima, a kooky geek who was the stepbrother of Amikino Turo. No one really liked him since he started to act weird some years ago. It seemed his new pastime was to frighten and embarrass innocent people for no reason. One time he threw a squirrel down the stairs because he did not like the animal's teeth.

"Oruto! Why you…? What are you up to?" wondered confused Beleta. "Could you please leave us alone? You should know I never want to see you!"

"You know him too?" asked the sergeant.

"I feel disturbing pity for it but yes. He's my… ex-boyfriend…"

This knowledge was completely new to Ludilo. Also, it was so irritating he decided to scowl the nerd in an evil way in order to evict him. After all, wasn't that what Beleta also hoped? That this interloper would simply vanish from the café for any reason what-so-ever? Well, unfortunately the scowling was not helpful at all because Oruto just sat at the table and had a big bite of Ludilo's donut.

"It's been a while so I decided to lurk here until I could meet you, honey", chattered the interloper ignoring our sergeant's presence. "You sure remember what my lord is currently working on. Just came here to remind you that only the likes of me can survive from that horrible wave. You know... You also can easily remain unharmed. Just had an idea about sterilizing myself and..."

The geek had gone too far with his hogwash so Ludilo stood up and shouted: "Bloody hell, man!! You know what? We've had enough of your fooling so get out! Get out or I'll make your nerdy nose even more hooker!"

At this point all the people in the café quit talking and the atmosphere became completely silent. Almost everyone watched curiously or grinned like "oh, so this place is like a New Yorkian pub". One of the café's employees came to see what's going on and asked if there were problems among the trio. Beleta then explained the situation properly which finally caused Oruto to leave. Ludilo instead got a single little caveat due to his threatening behavior. Perhaps it was wrong to give him that but at least for now, the couple could finally be at peace. Only that was important now.

"Would you like to have my donut and coffee?" asked Beleta after a long, silent moment. She looked a bit upset.

"No, thanks. I bought those just for you so please have them!" answered Ludilo and wiped the spilled coffee with a towel. "By the way, what did that freak even mean with all that? Has that Oruto started to anguish you or something?"

"Oruto doesn't want anything bad, you know... It's just um... There's one thing that will... What I mean is that..." stammered Beleta nervously. "I wonder how this should be said correctly so you won't get shocked."

"You mean you still love that Oruto?"

"Definitely not! I'm..."

"Why haven't you ever told me you had been in a relationship with that frigging Nikima? Has he told you to hide the fact from me? Or did he do something so horrible to you when you were dating and that's why you couldn't say anything, huh? What in the name of fuck did that nerd even mean by all that sterilize-babbling?! Come on! Answer me!"

The girlfriend got nervous. So nervous that she stood up and just left without saying a single word. Ludilo was about to go after her and find out what exactly was wrong but his mobile phone rang. Since the caller was captain Ĉevalo, our hunter had no choice but to respond.

"Captain Sir! This is kind of a bad situation! What is it?"

"Sergeant Peono! Your work today starts at 1700! It's an hour before expected because of the special conference for you hunters. Bulletin boards' information will display you the right hall number when you arrive here. Understood?"

"Understood, captain sir!"

"Good! Don't be late! And one thing I really do mind: that long hair of yours! Over!"

The obnoxious face of the irritating captain finally vanished from the screen. That double-chinned, bald headed, sun glassed jerk mug really was something that no one could stare for a single minute. And because of this pretty pointless videophone call, Beleta had completely vanished from the sight. Sure, Ludilo had tried to follow his beloved one during and after the talk but everything was still a wasted effort. He kept scoping all over the city and called her many times but the lady was still lost. Finally, it had to be admitted this was how the lovely date ended.

"God damn Nikima! Just why did he have to do this?! Why did he spoil the whole day? Why?!" shouted Ludilo without thinking at all if his girlfriend's sudden leaving could possibly have been because of his own, intruding questions.

Chapter four
The mysterious viral disease

It was heavy raining outside. Ludilo was crunching crisp bread in his living room as he wrote an SMS text message that said: "*I wanna talk with yu.its shame that oruto appered in teh cafe.could we meet honye?*" Even though the message was short and misspelled, it took almost a quarter of an hour to tap it. The sergeant wasn't a friend of SMS messages.

After the line had finally been sent, Ludilo looked at the wall clock. It was already half past four and about time to go to the International Vampire Eliminating Organization's conference. The hunter stopped lying on the sofa like a lazy sloth and went to the vestibule to dress up. He was upset and there were a couple of reasons for the distress. It was partly because of Beleta, partly because of the current weather and partly because of tonight’s night shift work as a duty officer. But it was not wise at any level to just keep fretting about these things. So, the man stepped outside, never mind taking an umbrella with him, and started up the Ford.

The distance was semi-long but thanks to the expressway, it didn't take much time to arrive the IVEO's secret base. Ludilo parked his car, exposed himself to the rain again, locked the Ford's doors and walked into the headquarter building. There was a note on the bulletin board that said the conference should be held in the third hall at seventeen o' clock. Because the place was on the third floor, Ludilo walked right up the stairs. The sergeant wasn't a friend of elevators either.

"Oh hello there! It seems even Peono is in time today, good good!" hollered a five feet long, fat guy called Kuriero at the hall door. He was the master sergeant of Ludilo's company and also a talented fencing teacher. For many years he had seen how our hunter always was the last one to arrive but now he was standing in front of a bit different situation for a change. Amikino instead was in much better light than Ludilo since he never was late and had mastered more lunge techniques that any other in the fencing lessons.

Speaking of the devil, after nodding at Kuriero as a greeting, Ludilo noticed that Amikino was sitting in the third last line of seats. The sergeant sat down next to his fellow and asked if there was any information about the main topic of the conference. The answer was a simple nope. What could be the reason for this unexpected meeting?

Sharp seventeen o' clock everybody was ordered to stand up and turn the head towards the commander who had just entered the hall. This scar-faced, black-haired colonel, called Cikatro Reĝo, having lots and lots of decorations pinned to his uniform was warmly welcomed by captain Ĉevalo. The bald captain apprised everything to be ready for starting the conference. After the colonel had thanked him and let the hand be put down from the peak, he

finally ordered everyone to sit down and the conference was officially started.

Cikatro Reĝo was the first one to talk, of course. "Ladies and gentlemen, the reason I have congregated us all here is to give you important information about a new phenomenon. The International Vampire Eliminating Organization Researchers in Germany have lately investigated that what some of us thought about the Lord's pandemic is true. There is a viral disease spreading all over the world and it is causing vampires to pass away very rapidly. Currently it is said that the disease can affect vampires only but further research is needed to confirm that!" he announced.

"So that's why the nasty mosquitos have been so weak in the last days", whispered Ludilo to Amikino but the guy just put his forefinger in front of his sibilant mouth.

"IVEOR's virology expert shall explicate things better. Doctor Sprita, please carry on!" said the colonel and after that a scientist in white clothes introduced herself. Then Ludilo became a bit bored since the scientist's voice was very passive and drowsy.

"For me it is a great honor to be here and I will do my best to clarify you every possible thing you need to know about the virus", said the middle-aged doctor. "We call the virus by the name VSCP which is an abbreviation of Vampire Spinal Cord Paralyzer. Like the name already says, the disease will paralyze the spinal cord of a vampire, making it unable to move its body. According to our research, the first symptom of having the infection is a simple fever but later the patient will start vomiting a lot of blood. Later the motoric functions and the physical condition will considerably weaken. Once the infection has proceeded far enough, the vampire will be fully paralyzed and dies most likely of dehydration. It's uncommon that someone could pour blood straightly to its mouth, after all."

A black hunter in the audience raised his hand. After getting the floor, he stood up and asked: "How could it be sure this virus does not affect humans?"

"That's actually the next thing I was about to talk about. Sure, we must be prepared for possible human infections even if they are unlikely. Let us first have a viewpoint of why the virus could not affect a human and then one where that could be possible... If you have a look at this illustration, you may see how different the bodies are between a human being and a vampire. The most notable difference is in the spinal column. Vampires have special potenca cells in their spinal cord which makes the bones so strong they can endure even if the creature falls down from a roof of a skyscraper. These cells can be damaged if they have any contact with silver though. And the VSCP also has the same effect on them as the silver has. These structural formulas show there are many things... …"

Ludilo felt how Amikino hit him with an elbow suddenly. It seemed our hippie sergeant had fallen asleep during the doc's speech. The wall clock was

quarter to six and that made the slacker wonder if he had missed something important during the last 45 minutes.

"...Again, we are still unable to find out where or how this virus had started to spread. Like it has been said, further research are required to answer these questions. We must do everything we can to ensure mankind's safety. But it looks like we are running out of time now... Thank you all for your attention. I wish you good success for your work in the future."

"That is what we also wish for you as well. Thanks for your great demonstration, doctor Sprita!" praised colonel Reĝo. Everyone clapped and after that he continued talking: "Currently, it seems this pandemic is only helping our hunters' work so let us be grateful for that. Hopefully this meeting gave you the information you needed and you no more wonder why the vampires have been weakening lately. I also thank you for your attention! The conference is concluded."

The hunters left the hall slowly but in a neat order. In the corridor sergeant Peono had a nip of his cognac. It was still fifteen minutes before his duty officer shift could start. He was a bit jealous of Amikino Turo who was about to go home and relax.

"It feels inglorious that we fight against ill and injured opponents. You think the same, pal?" asked Amikino in the stairway before leaving.

"Oh come on! You think those silver-phobic sucking-addicted assholes deserve some kind of respect? Think about it... I mean have they ever shown any respect to us?" blurted Ludilo.

"Oh well... No, they actually haven't but at least for me it doesn't feel fair to attack the weaker ones."

"You know what? That attitude of yours is exactly the reason why I was ranked to a sergeant before you! You should know that when dealing with blood suckers, fighting with honor must be completely forgotten. No mercy for devils! All they want is to cause havoc and sorrow!"

"Okay, okay... Fine. You've had a bad day or something?"

"Well, yeah. My relationship with Beleta is just resembling a farce. Oruto appeared in a café when we were there just having good time peacefully. He babbled something insane bullshit and that caused Beleta to leave me alone. He talked about his lord or something and also some sexual shit. So... when you see your step-bro again, could you please tell that freak to get some balls before coming to show his face?"

"I sure will tell him that. I promise. It really feels sad if my stepbrother really did something like that... He's always been a little, irritating menace. My apologies..."

"You shouldn't be the one to apologize! That was Oruto's fault. And by the way, have you ever heard he's the ex-boyfriend of Beleta?"

"What the...?! No, I didn't know that. So when have those two been dating each other then?"

"I'd tell if I knew..."

"Geez... I had no idea things could be this weird. Well, if my stepbro has tried to steal your chick, I'll make him stop these kinds of games for sure! But please excuse me... I have to go now. Bye!"

"Bye..."

And so Amikino left to his home with the promise in his mind. When he next could see his stepbrother, could it be the end of Oruto's fooling? No one still knew for sure. Anyway, Ludilo noticed the rain had ended which gave him a bit more willpower to stop fretting. But now it wasn't time to go outside and enjoy the sunny weather. It was time to take the golden colored plaque pendant and start working as a duty officer.

Chapter five
Ludilo’s nightmare

The job given to sergeant Peono that night was boring. Nothing special happened in the twelve hours which was very normal when serving as a night duty officer. It was mostly just writing down some events and their times in the logbook. And of course, when a person having a higher rank came in, it was better to remember the salutation. Special announcements via the central radio were not needed. The guards did not fall asleep like usually, that made the situation even more boring.

The most amusing event was when a lost, drunk man arrived at the place and asked if the building was some kind of brothel. But the guardians handled it all so that meant Ludilo mostly missed this funny event. The drunk person was driven away and then his memory was modified so that he never remembered visiting the secret base's entry. This was how every curious civilian intruder was used to be evicted from the place. The orders said this should be done even to the harmless, gentle people due to the extreme confidential reasons. IVEO should be kept as a secret. The purpose was that every exterior should be seeing the huge building as a regular, lonely, boring block of flats that was not special in any way.

When it finally was 6:00 AM, sleepy Ludilo gave the golden pendant to the next worker having a duty officer’s shift and went outside to start the car. On the way back home, the illumination was weak since the sun was still rising. The high beams should have been turned on but our hippie never minded. Thank God no one got hit by him on the damp road. It would not have been good for the scorcher either since he forgot to wear the seat belt.

It took only a few minutes to arrive at the destination via motor way. At home the yawning hunter went straightly to his unmade bed. He did not have any snacks or brush his teeth or even touch the curtains to be closed or opened. Good though that he put off the uniform before sleeping. This tired was sergeant Peono now. But unknown to him, soon his life was about to change much more restless and even painful than he would ever have guessed.

Soon, in a far away, exotic town, he was walking towards some strange ruins with his girlfriend. Ludilo’s dark hairdo and Beleta’s black, unzipped jacket were fluttering as the warm wind was blowing smoothly. There were not any signs of any irritating geeks or night shifts. It was just a romantic, at least a romantic-like, vacation after a long time. The weather was awesome and sunny, the atmosphere had tiny birds tweeting beautifully all the time and overall, everything was quite nice.

The couple then had an idea of going inside a stony temple, that was covered with variously colored vines, to find something promoting, like a treasure perhaps. For what reason? They just went inside and sat down on a

rocky bench for a while, letting the peaceful birds' tweeting to relax them. Our sergeant was not any kind of expert in identifying animal species so he was interested to know what birds those actually were. Toucans maybe? Or hummingbirds? Could Beleta know? The sergeant decided to ask her.

"They're children, not birds", was a weird answer but she was right. After paying more accuracy to listening, some children were playing some funny game together and just sounded like birds when they laughed. If you listened even more carefully, you realized they were not humans. Ludilo had a look at the laughers and almost had a heart attack. They were thirsty vampire children approaching the stone temple.

"No! Not those suckers here! Not now! What are they even doing here? Let's flee! Since we haven't got any weapons, we're totally defenseless!" shouted the hunter, took a hold on the lady's delicate hand and then started to run away as quickly as possible. Suddenly Beleta yanked her hand off Ludilo's grip though. She crouched down and vomited blood that was almost as red as her vermilion-colored shirt. Something was wrong.

"Get him, brats!" squalled the lady while lying down on the dusty floor and pointing her finger at the frightened sergeant. "The reason why we have to suffer exists because of humans like him exist! The likes of him are why that sanctimonious pandemic is killing us innocent ones. No mercy for those humans! All they want is to calumniate and eliminate us!"

Ludilo had no idea what the heck was going on. He just kept swearing in total panic like a youngster boy having to hide the cigarettes from mom when he was caught smoking. The pale-leathered, gnome-eared, sharp-teethed vampire brats grabbed the hunter as firmly as possible. They did not let go no matter what. Even as child-aged, all the vampires were over five times stronger than regular, grown-up men. So you could imagine what the possibilities to survive in the situation were. The brats just kept yelling, laughing, screaming… arguing about who shall bite first. The sergeant was like a candy or a toy in the situation.

Right when the hunter felt extreme pain in his neck, he woke up at home in his bed, having cold sweat on the forehead. He was shaking and huffing like a weightlifter after a sports performance. The nightmare he had seen was so insane he even felt a little shame for seeing something like it. Why would Beleta be a betrayer? However, soon, our sergeant finally calmed down, took up his phone and watched the screen.

Beleta had sent him a message. Now Sergeant Peono battled over half a minute with his phone's user interface and finally managed to display the message on the screen. It said: "*I feel ill. Could you come for a visit?*"

Even though the dream might have been a bad omen, the sergeant did not hesitate to go for a visit. If Beleta really felt ill, he should not leave her alone. But giving it a second thought, why would she ask anyone for a visit in a situation where she really was sick? She had always highlighted how

important it was to prevent unnecessary contacts when someone was ill. This was how diseases should not obtain possibilities to spread around. Sure it was Ludilo himself who had originally proposed visiting but still something felt a bit weird.

Anyway, before our hippie had even realized it, he was already walking spontaneously on the street leading to his girlfriend's house. It was so near the car was not needed now. Weird acting or not, was there something precious to lose on this visit that could take only like ten minutes?

When Ludilo walked past a playground on his journey, he noticed some preschool-aged children were playing there. The just-seen nightmare came to mind but the sergeant decided to ignore all his insane suggestions. It just could not be possible that those harmless kids were dangerous vampires. Even though they laughed like in the dream, the kids were pure humans. They were only humans swinging, playing tag and blowing soap bubbles. All the sunshine-reflecting bubbles first kept floating in the wind and finally popped to the ground. For a while the hunter recalled how he had himself had the same pastime as a child with his adoptive parents. The memory made him a bit happy but this was not the time for staring people. Thus, he continued walking.

When sergeant Peono arrived at the house, he opened the street door and went up the first stairs. Since the lady's apartment was in the first floor, this was enough of walking up stairs. The doorbell was rung and librarian Damo opened the door.

"Um... hello there, babe!" greeted Ludilo. "Nice to see ya... How are you? Have you lost your eyeglasses?"

"I don't know how much… how much time I have to live…" answered Beleta with a very upset tone and let her boyfriend enter the apartment. The woman who usually was in good mood, had now become sad, pale, nervous and desperate.

"Oh please don't talk like that. You're not fatally ill, are ya? What's the bug you've got then?"

"The VSCP."

Chapter six
Beleta explains it all

The hunter could not believe what he just heard. "Um… you sure? So, have you had a fever or vomiting or something? When did you become ill? How do you know about VSCP?" Ludilo asked.

"Yeah, fever and I've vomited blood and… To tell you the truth, I became sick last week but… but the symptoms were so tiny back then. I decided to hide this illness from you because… I thought you wouldn't understand…"

"Oh, come on! What do you mean I wouldn't understand? You had this illness in the café too? Why did you hide it from me? You think it's gonna change things better somehow?"

"No… I…"

"You should've asked me to drive you to the hospital! You haven't been to any doc, have you? If it gets worse, you can probably paralyze or even die! And, by the way, I must now inform IVEO that the disease actually can infect humans!"

"It cannot. Put the phone down!"

"What do you mean, dear? Didn't ya just say that you have that VSCP?"

"So, you haven't still realized… the truth about me? Even when you can actually see the virus caused me this condition, you just don't recognize it?"

"What I recognize is that you must be cured right now! We'll now go right to somewhere where you can be cured… How could you even know the virus exists? As a civilian, what or how can you know…?"

"Ludilo! It's about time to tell you a big secret I have been hiding from you… It's something that can shock you but… After all, it's unbelievable you haven't been able to find it out by yourself. Since you're a hunter and your parents have been brutally killed and all that… you will sure be mad at me after this. But never forget, dear, that I would never, ever cause you any harm even if I were the Satan himself. Do you believe that?"

"…that you're Satan?"

"No, no, no! Seriously, Ludilo! Why do you have to make this so annoyingly difficult? Try to realize that I'm… I'm really *a vampire*. And don't get the wrong idea because I still love you… um…"

The man got scared when he saw that Beleta had canine teeth. They came out of her mouth like cat claws. Also, now it was clear why she did not have eyeglasses like usually – do any perspicacious beings like vampires even need them? The insane truth was that she really was one of those evil creatures Ludilo used to kill all the time. One of the likes of who killed his parents. It felt so incomprehensible to find out this kind of truth of a very beloved person. Thinking of Beleta as the Bible's Satan would not have been so horrible compared to this. It was all quite like in the nightmare. In the

dream, she also was a vampire like now that you pay more attention to it. How could the hunter have been so blind all this time?

The sergeant did not know what to do. Or at least he couldn't decide what to do. Should he stab the hag with his silvery knife that he always, except in the nightmares, carried with him? Should he simply vanish from the place and later tell IVEO troops to eliminate her? Or probably the best option was to serve her a "comforting" cup of tea which would really be a mixture of chamomile, milk and lethal cognac. Vampires could not stand alcohol. As they had taught at IVEO, alcohol was like poison to vampires. Or should it be best if the couple could just talk and make everything clear with no violence? Could it be possible that she really did not want anything bad to anyone and the couple should begin to think how Beleta could be cured?

Suddenly Beleta ran past Ludilo so quickly that the hunter's curly hairdo fluttered a bit. She went to the toilet and seemed to vomit blood. She sounded very sick. Ludilo followed her carefully and noticed the woman was also crying blood. And, to be honest, it was the first time he had ever seen her crying.

"Listen! You must know… know something about an insane scientist… and Oruto… and my work at IVEO. Yeah… there was a time when I was a hunter… Please, don't leave yet! Could you please stay here a moment and listen to me… dear?" stammered the lady after the vomiting had stopped for a moment.

"Just what is wrong with you? Now you're telling me you're a vampire hunter? Didn't you just say you're a blood sucker? You deranged hag!" shouted our angry, confused protagonist.

"Let me explain… Years ago, I and that jerk, who I loved back then, were IVEO corporals, both having… having the same opinions about vampires. We believed there were good, peace-loving vampires like us… but that there were also human haters among our race. Our secret goal was to protect the good ones and to prevent the bad ones causing sorrow. We only killed vampires who weren't innocent and… well… It all worked well until one day a private found out our true natures. You know… IVEO doesn't allow vampires to join them… We were almost killed there but survived somehow… for us, the best way to protect the good ones was to infiltrate IVEO."

"Okay, so you're telling me that Oruto Nikima is a sucker too?!"

"Yes but… he's different. There's also more I need to tell. One scientist called doctor Turmento has modified his spinal cord so that he's… he's completely immune against the VSCP virus… and still he can be as strong as vampires usually are…"

"Wait! If there's a way to be immune against the virus, why haven't you asked if the same immunity could be given to you as well?"

"I can't! I don't want! Oruto also wants just the same. That I'd survive from that terrible disease. The point is that I don't… I don't trust that scientist at all… and even if I trusted, Turmento would never make me immune against his own virus."

"His own virus? So, this whole holy pandemic was created by that human scientist called doctor Turmento? But… I just don't understand why that doc can't make you immune against VSCP as well. Not to mention how you could have kept all this as a secret!"

"Per se he could make me immune but… I've been in a relationship with Oruto so… Turmento is afraid of that we two could make it possible for vampires to have new generations. The mad scientist hates us vampires so much he has decided to extinguish our race once and for all. He thinks it's what God has always wanted right from the Big Bang. And then… the doctor just created the VSCP and spread it everywhere on the planet."

"This sounds fucking insane! If the doc has decided to kill every single vampire, then why can't he eliminate that bastard Oruto since he's also a sucker? What makes him so special that he can survive and get away with everything unlike every other vampire?"

"Nikima's like Turmento's right hand… a very loyal servant or something of that nature. I must admit that I don't know either what is the actual reason. There has to be something relevant Oruto has never told me about… and Turmento also knows that secret."

"I'd so like to know every secret that you guys have been hiding from me. Where those two bastards are even located now?"

"I'm not sure... At least I haven't seen the scientist after quitting my work at IVEO. Most likely he and his jerky servant are still in Glaciourbo, a glacial area in the northern state. Although Oruto might be lurking here in Polurourbo sometimes... You remember how he appeared in the café... when...? Ugh… Sorry..."

Beleta vomited again. Ludilo turned around and started to think about all those weird things he just heard. There were many questions he wanted someone to answer. For instance, if his own beloved one was a blood sucker, could he continue his work at IVEO with moral anymore? Or could it simply be the best if the hunter decided to divorce the lady and leave her alone with no mercy? Or perhaps the only wise option was that she must be cured? And should the disease vanish for good? Every single vampire cannot be evil, right? After all, Beleta still was the sergeant's beloved one. But she had had a relationship with that Oruto who was also carrying some secret. And not to mention this new scientist, doctor Turmento… Whose side could he be on then and what kind of man was he in general?

Ludilo thought to himself it was becoming a great farce. And when the times were this incomprehensible, the best way to solve the life situation was

to talk with Amikino. He was a genius who had brains to solve many sort of psychological mysteries like this one.

"Listen... You must promise... promise one thing: that you don't tell anyone about these things I just revealed. Especially the IVEO's hunters... they're who you should never tell. Please promise!" begged Beleta while wiping the bloody clothes she had smudged herself. And that was the end of all plans of talking with a very good fellow sergeant.

"Yeah, yeah, I'll promise then if that's so annoyingly important for you! But I've had enough of this shit, you know? Goodbye! I wish we don't ever meet or date again!" were the last words said by the man before leaving his, kind of, beloved one's apartment. He ran off without even closing the door. The confused man just needed some fresh air and a little relaxing time to get over with these things.

Beleta's crying echoed in the stairway: "Hey Ludilo! Please forgive me! I'm so sorry! The purpose wasn't that I would offend you or anything. Once you've calmed down, could we please meet and talk? Ludilo! Ludilo?!"

Chapter seven
Rail journey to the chilly hell

The sergeant pondered it all even on the next Thursday but was still unable to make any sort of decisions. Beleta had tried to contact him for several times but Ludilo ignored every single call and did not response in any way. He no more wanted to rub elbows with the nasty vampire lady and had even thought about using the MED to himself in order to forget her. However, the hunter was not sure if the idea could be able to solve any of his problems for real.

On this Thursday morning he was solving newspaper's crosswords and eating lumpy porridge until captain Ĉevalo called via video phone.

"Captain Sir! Sergeant Peono listening."

"So, sergeant Peono, are you ready?"

"Um... for what?"

"For the OG-11 of course! The eleventh operation in Glaciourbo. Don't say you have totally forgotten that the train departs in half hours! At 0900!"

"Eh... No, of course I remember... actually I'm on my way already!"

"Does not seem like it! Why are you holding a spoon? Are you still at your home, boy? Just for your information: if you somehow manage to be late, you'll become a corporal! No… a private, I say! And it's not only about a rank-down. I will also give you some extra duty officer's shifts! Understood?!"

"Yes sir, Captain Sir!"

"And one thing I really do mind: that long hair of yours! Over!"

It was yet another justifiable call of reminding Ludilo about something important. Even though the hunter hated that bald, double chinned captain so much, he was very grateful for the remind. Beleta and her annoying actions had caused him to lose the work precision even more. But, since the destination was now that Glaciourbo she had mentioned, perhaps the upcoming mission could be very interesting and the precision would come back.

The sergeant did not want to waste time so he left his home right at the second. He did not solve the crossword completely or eat even half of the porridge. They all were just left there on the already enough dusty kitchen table.

"Would be so bad to gain a rank-down", Ludilo thought to himself as he scorched to the IVEO's railway station. "Blah, blah, blah… Stop yapping in my head, Amikino! Because of a possible rank-down, I know you'd start performing your darkest sense of humor and to pick me on like a dummy boy. But you know what? I won't be late or allowing your gloat. And extra officer shifts… no thanks!"

So even Ludilo with his almost defective brain understood how much worse

things could get when ignoring the work. But, after all, there were not any problems arriving at the station on time. At nine o'clock all hunters including our sergeant were ordered in three army-like lines, ready for entering the train. But before the trail, captain Ĉevalo babbled some instructions for the mission. It was better to avoid especially frostbites, avalanches and getting lost. Like anyone could really be enough idiot to get in these "dangers". Anyway, the next six hours were just sitting in the train and being bored.

Glaciourbo was a freezing area in the north. What made it so special? Nothing if its godless "Eskimo vampires" did not count. These blood plasma thirsty creatures were after "cold" blood that was not rich in hemoglobin; low-hemoglobined blood that e.g. some north-living goats had.

Also this time the hunters' mission was quite simple: kill all vampires and try to protect civilians. If any civilian actually sees a vampire causing havoc, erase his or her memory right away using the MED. However, even if the mission was simple, no one could say it could be easy. IVEO's weather forecast systems had predicated –5 °F temperature and some cold wind. It could not matter how many clothes you had on, anyway, there was a big risk to catch a cold. There could be many frostbites and shaking that could be a mixture of freezing half-dead and fearing the area's vampires.

Ludilo and Amikino were talking in the very last couchette of the train. They thought there could be enough silence for taking a nap if necessary.

"By the way, Ludilo, I talked with my stepbrother yesterday", said Amikino.

"You did? So what did he say?" answered Ludilo.

"He sent you some hilarious but sarcastic greetings. It's like… I mean for some reason he thinks you're only a threat to Beleta. Oruto Nikima said that he himself and only he can save your girl. You should stay out of what's ongoing and leave Beleta alone, he asserted so badly. It's about a very huge… um… pandemic. That's what he called it. I wonder if it has something to do with that VSCP we heard about last week but who knows for sure? I mean what would Oruto even know about it? He's a freaky bastard, nothing else. And you know what?"

"There's more bullshit coming?"

"That's right. Oruto said he'll sterilize himself today. You can believe that? At long last! Too bad has no balls in general though. The nerd's effort is so wasted that he could as well go gras-weeding the whole Antarctica."

"Yeah... eh... eh..."

"Okay, that was lame... But c'mon! Normally you'd laugh your ass off even on jokes like this one! So is there something wrong? Or have you just grown up and never minding silly jokes?"

"Just shut up for a moment! I mean… do you happen to know any guy called Turmento?"

"Um… Do you mean Medikamento?"

"I dunno... Some-mento? Do you happen to know any guy who could be Oruto's boss perhaps? And living in Glaciourbo?"

"I have no idea… Never been interested in tormented guys. But you know what's special in Medikamento? He's enough fool to produce antidote for those suckers."

"You mean…?"

"That he cures creatures we're supposed to kill, yes! Rumors say that he has a secret lab at the University of Polurourbo. He's performing silent, scientific researches in order to make effective medicine against the VSCP. Can you believe that? No wonder why he got fired from IVEO Researchers' Faculty."

"Is that true? Has he managed to cure any vampires?"

"Probably yes, with a special vaccine. When a vampire gets the disease, the effects get as minimum as possible. Unfortunately! And that's what I just can't accept, vampires surviving... How could anyone use good brains for such a worthless thing? Like there wouldn't be any more important things to solve in this world. Giving help to some silver-phobic pale boys who can't even drink beer… It's just ridiculous!"

"Perhaps all vampires aren't evil?"

"Hey! You don't even believe that yourself! Last week you said yourself something like vampires don't deserve any mercy and all they want is to cause pain."

"Yeah... um..."

"You're acting kinda weird today. I haven't even seen you drinking that cognac of yours. Is that because you actually have serious troubles with Beleta? Is it more serious I've thought?"

At this point Ludilo had a nip of his XO-cognac so he would seem like everything was enough okay. "Let's just say there are two damn things in the world I don't understand: vampires and women! These two I'll never even try to understand!" he swore and drank.

The hunter couple finally decided they would not talk about women or vampires during the trail. Instead the tired men started to gamble. They played Poker and Blackjack with Amikino's old, yellowish playing cards. Too bad Ludilo was unaware that with those cards his fellow managed to cheat. Some cards had ruptured a bit and some of them were way more yellowish than others. Also, Amikino could count cards. Amikino with his good memory could sometimes read what cards the opponent was having in his hand. What's worse, Ludilo was worrying about Beleta and had lost even his very last concentration abilities.

It was not a surprise our sergeant had lost almost half of his money when the locomotive finally arrived in Glaciourbo. It felt relaxing to breathe some fresh air and walk a bit. Even though it was so cold that the nasal hair got almost completely frozen when breathing in. And when breathing out, it was

like smoking cigarettes with no nicotine, tar or anything else unhealthy.

And what did Glaciourbo look like? It was a beautiful place but not any kind of paradise. No one could have imagined by sightseeing how hellish the place was really like. There were a lot of snowy fir trees, huge mountains, nice cottages and running reindeers who might have got scared by the train that had just arrived. Everything looked like Antarctica.

The sunset had already begun even though it wasn't even three o'clock. The sky had many hues of orange and purple colors. One of those hues was nearly like Beleta's hair but when our sergeant realized it, he turned his sight to the ground and spat some ugly saliva.

Before beginning the mission, it was a quick lunch time, and the five-foot-long master sergeant Kuriero told everyone to eat well. Not many hunters ate though since they offered just some old oat bread and vegetable soap. But even Ludilo with his defective brains understood how important it was to have at least something. After all, it was completely free and healthy food.

However, soon captain Ĉevalo ordered the hunters to stand in attention in three rowed lines. He babbled the very last instructions and told the hunter team leaders to move on. The hunters having a bit lower rank were now put in charge. The responsibility was now on Ludilo and Amikino as well.

"Team six, attention!! It's time to go! Move out! Chop chop!" yelled Ludilo after a moment. Then he with his team was marching in the footprints of Amikino and his team.

Sergeant Peono was completely unaware about all the horrible things that would happen during this mission. These unknown events, whatever to be revealed, were about to chill the heart with no mercy.

Chapter eight
At the feet of mount Amikamurdinto

The hunter units navigated to the areas they were ordered to go. Some of them had skies or snow scooters but some did not have anything like the teams five and six. Thus, Ludilo and Amikino, the leaders of those teams, were trudging in the snowy terrain. They had the same destination, the feet of mount Amikamurdinto, which meant they did not have to separate each other. The two men were talking about hunters' weapons and how they had been improved in the last ages.

"Ever killed a suck addict using an oak stake only, Lud?"

"Definitely not, man! You can't even kill yourself with that ancient piece of crap."

"Well I agree actually. I tried it once and it all was one farce."

"So you tried a suicide or…?"

"C'mon, hippie! Tried to kill a vampire, not myself! Thus, that was something I'm supposed to comment. I'm the one who's supposed to be the master of black humor here. Anyway, I believe these new weapons are way better than the old ones though people claim something else. In my genius's opinion, the only good old weapon is the silver saber."

"But that's a close-distance thing. Must get very close or you get in a serious danger."

"No shit, sherlock! But yeah… that's right. I must at least admit that hunters of the ancient ages were very skilled. They did fine even without these bombs and guns we've got nowadays. Also, not any MEDs were invented so just think about that. Transylvania's civilians seeing The Great Count Dracula in their nightmares all the time, I mean if they even dared to sleep when knowing these monsters actually existed. It's good the present-day people don't have to fear or anything and can only live quite in th…"

"Halt!! Reload your guns!" shouted Ludilo all of a sudden as he noticed some strange moving behind the snowy pines and firs. Everyone stopped and did what was ordered. After that, it was so deserted silence everywhere. Only some random sounds of sneezed hunters' sniffles could be heard. No one hardly dared to stir during this minute. It was snowing and the falling snowflakes heaped on everyone's helmets bit by bit. But their heads were moving all the time of course. It was better to keep searching if there were suspicious beings nearby.

"Is that a wolverine or... no... Is that Beleta?" whispered Amikino to our protagonist.

"Don't be stupid! Beleta is in Polurourbo and she's ill!" was the hippie sergeant's answer to the weird suggestion of his pal.

"Oh... yeah. Well then... So, wait, is she ill?"

"That's right and before you ask what illness does she have, let's just move

on, okay? Never mind! It think it was just a rabbit that was jumping over there."

"Are you serious, man? How could anyone not clearly see what's a funny bunny and what's a deadly vampire?"

"Did I ever even claim there really is a sucker you motherfucker?!" snapped Ludilo like a bull. "Attention, hunters! Let's move on! Chop chop! Don't just gape there like a bunch of idiots!"

And so they continued the trampling, never minding what was there in the snowy bushes. Ludilo stole the navigating task from Amikino. It was dangerous to give such an important task to anyone who thought some hags would follow them even to a place like Glaciourbo, thought the hippie. Seriously, why would Beleta have any reasons for coming this far from the home town? To a place that had been raped by frost and snow? What an insane thought.

According to the GPS device, the direction seemed to be exactly wrong. Nine miles to the west and the hunters would be at the destination point, mount Amikamurdinto. Well at least Ludilo thought so until his fellow remarked the device was upside-down. So the truth was the east direction was right. Needless to say, there were many symbols that did not make sense when the device was upside-down.

"God damn hi-technology piece o' shit!" swore Ludilo. "Just what's the point of all this modern computer stuff? Why don't people prefer a simple map and a simple compass anymore like in the old days? Just why?!"

"What prevents you from using old stuff?" answered Amikino. Ludilo did not respond.

The bad language echoed all over the place spreading a lot of frustration among the hunters. The sky was getting so dark that the solarium lamps had to be taken up. The snowing got denser. The sounds of hungry, howling wolves could be heard randomly and they scared the hunter teams a bit. Except Ludilo. But still, the most annoying thing was the freezing weather and its cold wind. You might have had very warm and thick clothes but for what? It was still so cold that the fingers felt like they were real icicles. Not to mention, the snot flowed out of nose like stearin in a candle.

"Teams five and six! Attention! Thirty minutes! Let's rest for a while! Break time!" ordered Sergeant Amikino Turo after an hour of walking. He took up his lighter and his cigarette case. "You there with a toboggan! Gimme some firewood so we can make a bonfire."

Break time was necessary and especially the thought about a bonfire was like music to the hunters' ears. Sad though that setting the fire was annoyingly difficult because of all the snow and wind. But luckily, Ludilo had his strongest cognac with him, unopened. Without some drops of it, along with newspapers, the vampire hunters could not have set the fire before the next May.

Some hunters had sausages with them and began to grill; some just warmed themselves and ate nothing. The smelling smoke, slush-surrounded bonfire heated nicely the face, chest, thighs and the whole front side of the body, of course. The backside instead was freezing if you did not turn around regularly. Sergeant Peono did not drink cognac this time and there were two reasons for that: he was afraid of getting smoke in his face by the wind and the XO pocket flask was almost empty anyway. The other, recently opened one was VS cognac.

Amikino was sitting next to Ludilo and kept throwing more wood into the flames. Then for some reason he stopped for a while. He threw a sort of Sherlock Holmes's mystery solving grin-look at the hippie. The fellow whispered: "You know what, buddy… I've been thinking a couple of things and there's one thing I must tell you…"

"Don't tell me what I think you're gonna tell me", said Ludilo but kept listening.

"You should divorce that Beleta."

"Oh God, you've done it…"

"No, don't go! Enough with jokes… You know why it's important to divorce her?"

"Why?"

"Don't you think she might be… a vampire?"

"Definitely not!" blurted sergeant Peono immediately because, after all, did not he make a promise to his dear? A promise of being quiet of all what the lady told him a couple of days ago? It probably would not be a good idea to reveal Beleta's true vampire nature yet, so Ludilo continued arguing: "I mean think about it! How could that be possible anyhow? She's got glasses and you know vampires can't be myopic."

"What kind of argument is that, huh? Many vamps try to mimic humans by using specs even though they don't really need them. Specs that don't have lens power at all. They try to lurk in the shadows like your girlfriend! Plus, didn't you say Beleta's ill? Can I ask you if she's got VSCP infection?"

"You're so retarded… Can I ask you if your stepbro is a vamp?"

"Oruto? What do you…? Come on! He's once been a hunter so how could…?"

"Yeah, yeah… and have I ever mentioned that there was time when Beleta also was a hunter?"

"What? Oh… well, then it's… Okay, maybe I was wrong. Just forgive my foolish doubts! Why didn't you say that before? Of course… If it's true what you said and she has really been a hunter, then it's an impossible idea I just had in mind. Beleta is not a vampire."

"One more reason why I got the sergeant's rank before you."

"Oh yeah… yeah… but… I must have a leak."

"Help yourself!"

That was close. Amikino was actually smart when it came to finding out secrets. It was no surprise he had begun to think Beleta was a vampire. Thank God her true form was not revealed. But on the other hand, Ludilo started to regret not telling his good friend. Could the perfectionist really have told anything further to the other hunters? What was going on with Ludilo's brave ability to trust others? Or, now that you think seriously, perhaps the best happened. It was better that even Amikino did not know anything yet. A promise to a hag is still a promise to a real lady, right? At least that is what wanna-be-gentlemen think. Even Ludilo, believe or not.

"Attention, everyone! Reload your guns and get your sabers ready! The vamp-asses are coming from north-east so just get ready already!" shouted Amikino as he quickly returned from the snowy bushes. Everyone did what he ordered and quit the sausage party. Soon, it was a fiery battle going on.

A pale face dressed in a red jacket ran towards Ludilo but someone shot her before the hippie had even realized to load his Colt Python Ag gun. Before the death, the bloodthirsty creature said clearly that "Turmento corps must fall". And what did that mean, more exactly? So these vampires thought that the mysterious doctor Turmento, which was mentioned by Beleta, had sent the hunters here? What was the point of all this?

"Oh my God!! They’ve got rifles!" screamed a corporal in the noisy battle field. Whoever he was, was right. The vampire creatures had dangerous, fiery weapons with them. They had assault rifles. It had been a long time since Ludilo last saw his arch nemesis group having that kind of firepower and unfortunately, the only way to get out of the situation was to fight like an insane belligerent. Even though the bulletproof vest was a basic part of a hunter's equipment, the emotion of fear was huger than ever.

As our protagonist kept slashing the enemies with his silver sword, shooting them with his gun and throwing silver grenades, everything was becoming more hopeless and hopeless. The local Eskimo vampires were way more resistant than the ones in the Veneno woods. Disagree and consider yourself the greatest idiot ever. However, everyone wondered if these beings had even got the VSCP infection. After all, the medics were so much busier than usually. Thus, it could be said that the vampires were all wholesome for sure.

It did not take much time before a very tragic scene began. Suddenly the still-living vampires retired. The hunter groups kept firing silvery bullets to their backs and shouted "cowards, cowards, cowards" but to tell you the truth, the escapers were just wise. They realized the situation and only saved themselves when escaping.

Sergeant Amikino Turo was the first one to realize the danger. "Oh shit! An avalanche! Run for your... lives!!" he shouted louder than ever. The panic spread over everyone's auras just as fast as people could run in the situation.

Then Ludilo was grabbed by a shadowy person. It just lifted him up and started to carry the hippie like a bag. Its running speed was incredible even

on this deep snow field and the sergeant did not have the foggiest idea what was the meaning of all this. While hanging upside-down, the man could only see how the snowy flour wave got closer and closer. The avalanche buried the hunter fellows, the bonfire and everything else. But he himself plus the unknown carrier were still unharmed and running away as the sounds of despair spread everywhere. It was hard to stay calmed down but, anyway, that was the best key to survive – not to lose the concentration no matter what.

It took a while before the sergeant realized he had been grabbed by a vampire. Thus, he started to struggle like a cat in its owner's hands before taking a bath. When Ludilo tried to grab his weapons, Beleta's voice said: "Don't be afraid, it's just me! We must flee as soon as possible, in case we don't want to get buried alive!"

Chapter nine
The right path

The sergeant could not really decide what he should do or how he should be reacting. Was it better to laugh, cry, thank or get angry? The potential reason for laughing was that a female vampire was carrying a male vampire hunter. The reason to cry could have been that every single hunter fellow seemed to be dying under the avalanche in a brutal way. Why the gratefulness? Because Ludilo himself had the best probability to survive, thanks to the suddenly appeared lady. The angry part again was reasoned by the fact that this Beleta had quietly followed the hunters. Come on! Did she not understand the wisest choice in her life situation? Instead of staying at home, why to travel all this way to Glaciourbo? The "Lord's pandemic" could make her even die here at the freezing hell.

After ten minutes it was safe to stop and Beleta finally let the man just stand himself. She crouched down. She was holding her delicate, shaking hand on her chest at the spot wherein the heart was beating. And she was breathing deeply while Ludilo listened like a lucky man as the stream clouds came out of the woman's lungs. Looks like the running took almost all of her powers, not to mention the VSCP.

The sergeant pointed her body with his lamp and saw how bad the woman's actual condition was. The clothes, at least black trousers plus jacket, were very shredded and snowy. There were a couple of tiny icicles hanging under the spectacles, mostly at the nose and the chin. She was so pale that the face bones seemed to be yellowing under the skin. Was that kind of paleness normal even for vampires?

"Could you please turn off the lamp? It feels ugly..." said Beleta and so our dummy sergeant remembered that solarium light was actually a hunter's tool for weakening vampires like her. Thus, in order to not hurt his life savior, Ludilo turned the light off immediately.

"Sorry... and thanks", he managed to mumble after a while. After another while, he continued in a semi-angry way: "Geez! How or why did you even get here?"

"Stupid questions! Well, just imagine yourself what could have happened. If I weren't here in time, you could be a dead skunk right now. But if you really care how I got here, I was in the same train with you hunters."

"You are in the same fuckness with us hunters... You should've stayed at home! Who even told ya about this Glaciourbo trip? How did you find out I was comin' here?"

"Oruto told me and he again had asked Amikino about your trip."

"Playing dirty games behind my back, huh?! You guys really are some nasty puppets... But tell me: when did you meet that Oruto?"

"That madman came for a visit a couple of days ago and then he... he

pressured me into returning to his side... to love him since his lord could even cure me. I refused... said no to all that and asked, by the way, if his stepbrother k-knew about my true nature. The point of that was only to find out if you had broken our promise. You know... Amikino could probably be the only one who you would tell I am a v..."

"Enough, that's nonsense! I swear I haven't told anyone. Do you think I break every single promise? What exactly did Oruto answer to your question anyway? Not that it matters but I'd like to know."

"Oh, he said that Amikino does not know anything but might reveal my secret since you and he were going to Glaciourbo on the next Thursday. I was so... so worried about you and thus I decided to follow you here."

"You fool! Don't you see what kind of decision you've done? Try to realize that the virus... Oh, never mind! You happen to know what happened to Amikino? Did he damn die out there?! Now lemme just call help... I should've done this a long time ago."

Ludilo took up his phone and called. While he waited for someone to answer, his girl suddenly crouched and vomited blood. The normally red liquid looked raw umber, almost black, and perhaps it was because the sunset had already ended and it was dark like at midnights. But, on the other hand, maybe the color was a special symptom of the virus. Could it be normal at any level that the almost black blood glittered on the snow like a hematite?

"Sir Captain Sir! This is sergeant Peono!" spoke Ludilo to the answerer, captain Ĉevalo. "Teams five and six have got buried by an avalanche at the feet of mount Amikamurdinto. Please send some helpers!"

"An avalanche? Area Amikamurdinto? Ok... we will send two medic units if that is fine to you. Can you suggest how many survivors are there?"

"Only the two of us."

"You and sergeant Turo?"

"I and this Beleta... No! I mean only I. I was the only survivor, captain sir!"

"Beleta... What?! You don't mean that Damo who years ago turned out to be a vampire, do you? The blood sucker I detected among us? What on earth is she doing with you there?"

At this point the lady took part in the video phone call. She stood up and just walked next to the sergeant so she also could talk with the captain. Ludilo first tried to hide her by turning the phone's camera to another direction but then realized how badly she insisted on talking. Just a look at the lady's pale face and brown eyes told enough – it was better to just let her say what she wanted to say.

"Yeah, it is me who was the second survivor. It has been a long time since we last talked like this, Ĉevalo. But do not get me wrong because only my enormous hate is forcing me to be present in this call!" Beleta started. Then she continued without giving the captain a chance to reply: "You brainless bastard... making others like Ludilo to do all the dangerous work! I do not

remember any situation when you could possibly have put your own life in danger... but well, that is just your true coward nature that no one really cares about."

"Oh my", gnarled Ĉevalo. "Just tell me what your point is, lady... By the way, you look sicker than normal! How come?"

"Stop acting like you would have some empathy! All you want is money that you get by killing the likes of me... huff... This is ridiculous! Even when you are an idiot, you seem to realize who saved a man of your units. Your face itself tells it to me. Still, you do not say a thank you. But that is of course because I am what I am. You would never thank a vampire even if you got a million for the little words. Even if I was not a blood sucker, the situation would still remain the same since you are also a chauvinist."

"Get on with it! You are only wasting my time."

"I have the VSCP but before my death I shall give you a hint... a hint that helps you to become a better captain over there... a hint that you do need!"

"Oh, now you are about to hurt my pride as an experienced captain? I warn you! Do not dare to say anything foolish and just save your breath! But hey... Sergeant Peono... I mean corporal Peono!! You shall now return to the base immediately so we can have a long, hellish talking time!"

"Oh come on! What bad has Ludilo done? Saved himself? It is no use to get madder than you already are. And that hint of mine is that do not eliminate every single vampire who happen to get in your way! Believe it or not but there will be a day when even you realize that there are good vampires too! That was all... goodbye!"

"Oh what? That was all you wanted to say? How childish! I thought the vamp had something important to tell."

Beleta had stepped back. She let Ludilo and the captain talk twosome. Our sergeant... no, corporal, was not only confused but also very depressed. Beleta's illness, the avalanche, a rank-down... What else would be coming up?

"Corporal Peono!" shouted the captain after a little silence. Ludilo did not even care to put his heels together though but he still listened. "Why is she with you over there? Can you give an explanation? No, wait... could it be possible that...? Listen! If I can find even a single proof of you causing the avalanche with Miss Damo, you will be fired before you can say a damn word! As I ordered, return to the base immediately! And one thing I do really mind: that long hair o..."

"Shut the fuck up, Ĉevalo!!" shouted Ludilo so intensively that his face was redder than ever. He had also decided an important and surprising thing that could change his life completely. "I've got no plans of returning to anywhere nor cutting my hairdo! Plus, how dare you blame me or Beleta for the accident? It's no use to blame anyone since we haven't done anything bad! Guess what? I've decided one thing... I'll willingly abdicate my job as a

hunter. I'll quit! I'm gonna put an end to the sorrow of all innocent vampires as well as to the sanctimonious pandemic. I've finally found my right path and if I intend to stay on that path, I must abandon this naïve hate against the vampires. I've had that hate long enough! And so have you... but I know you'll never quit hunting so I'm not wasting my breath by explaining any details to you!"

After Ludilo's tantrum was over, it was silent for a while. Ĉevalo's red, funny-looking face was worth seeing. The mouth was completely open and the eyes were almost perfect circles. But the face expression did not last long. The bald-headed captain stepped back and waved his right hand like he was calling someone to take part in the phone call. Then a black-haired, scar-faced colonel Cikatro Reĝo walked to the screen where the captain recently was. Our hippie corporal had an uncomforted feeling. He felt like the colonel would soon say something serious.

"Oh my, did I understand right what is going on?" asked the colonel. "Are you leaving IVEO? I would never have believed you could ever do something like that, Peono. But I am not going to stop you. Do what you want but before you really decide to leave us, let me tell you something... something I actually should have told you many years ago."

"I've already made my final decision! It doesn't matter if you sing a sort of lullaby to me because my mind can't be changed!"

"If you really do not change your mind, young man, then we consider you... as an ungrateful person."

"Ungrateful? How come? So what?"

"You probably do not remember this because I erased your memory with MErDe but... Well, since the erasing did not complete successfully back then, perhaps you might believe what I am going to tell you. You might remember the day I saved you from vampires. I was an ensign about thirteen years ago when it happened... I tried to save also your parents but..."

"What?! You're telling me that YOU were the scar-faced person all this time... I mean the man who also put me to drink the holy water?"

"Correct."

"But... why have you stayed silent for all this time?! I've been a hunter for a couple of years already, come on! Do lords at IVEO usually keep these kind of huge things as secrets?!"

"Calm down! I will explain. I swear that by keeping these things as secrets, we were thinking just what was the best for you. Besides, memory erasing is an important thing in a hunter's job as you know. You, mister Peono, could not have been any kind of exception among the other civilians. That was the basic reason why the Memory Erasing Device was used on you. However, because you were in a total panic after losing your parents, the device did not work very well. I decided to use “spirits” so you would have forgotten as many things as possible. And I am not talking about any kind of Jesus things,

it was alcohol. To you I said it was Orthodox holy water, yes, but that was only a lie. I can just wonder how much information still stayed in your mind but... well, the point was to minimize your traumas. I needed you to join the hunters when you grew up."

"What a sick idea! Did you actually use strong alcohol just to erase my memories? I was just seven years old, wasn't I? Man... And that method of yours didn't even work completely?! Explain this before I get really mad!"

"We were just thinking about the best thing to do when caring about you and your situation. Think about it yourself... Could you really have become a great hunter if the too traumatic memories had stayed in your head? You sure could have feared the vampires too much. Let me tell you... At the night, you lost your parents, you fought like an experienced hunter already. You were throwing the kitchen's silvery dishes so hard that the vampires fainted. However, unfortunately, the blood suckers finally took the lead. After all, you were just a little boy back then. The vampires started to torture you slowly in order to get a nice revenge. They did many kind of raw things. Luckily, I was just in time over there and saved you from the trouble. Anyway, I instantly noticed how good hunter you could be and made sure you would end up working to us years later."

"So I was just a toy you insisted to take part in your foolish game?!"

"Oh do not put it that way! This is not any kind of foolish game. I only tried to offer you a great future at our organization."

"Screw you! Wasn't I just about to get killed by an avalanche?! Is it also a part of the so-called great future you're babbling about? Getting killed by avalanche-like things with no reason?!"

"Peono... How can you be so childish? Are you seriously that ungrateful? Do you not see how much honor debts you have? We hunters have saved your life, gave you an incredibly good job and lots of money… and cognac! Not only money but also some much more important things... friends, education, power and courage! I certainly do not see how you can even think about quitting your great work!"

"God dammit! Try to believe I've already made my final decision and found my right path! I'll be using the power, courage and all that you've taught to me to make myself a greater man! I'll be using them against you if I want to! I'll become a man who does not attack the innocent! A man who does not take orders like a dog! A man who's not a proud bastard or hater or anything like that!"

These were the final words Ludilo Peono said to Cikatro Reĝo. The angry hippie just turned off his phone never minding the colonel's waving. This was the beginning of a new life... or was it for sure?

Chapter ten
The final, bloody kiss

Ludilo and Beleta spend the next night in an abandoned, decayed barn they happened to find when walking somewhere in Glaciourbo. The couple was completely lost, freezing and hungry but the things could have been even worse though. At least they had some kind of place to sleep in. Plus, the lovers had not lost each other.

EX-sergeant Peono threw some hay into the campfire he had made hours ago to increase the barn's temperature. He had to use the last drops of his cognac since it was too difficult to keep the campfire burning without some sort of alcoholic liquid. It was Ludilo's turn to be awake and Beleta's turn to sleep. The woman seemed to have a nightmare in the hay piles that were a bit colored by her bloody vomit. She was also coughing sometimes because of the campfire's ugly smoke. Hopefully. If the coughing was caused by the VSCP virus, things would be worse than expected. The fact would be then that the virus had proceeded too far. Beleta might draw her last breathes anytime.

Ludilo checked if there were any burnable items in his pocket. He then took up his small calendar and smirked a bit as having a look at its pages. It was November the 13th. The man's parents' funeral was kept thirteen years ago. Fate had some nerve to decide the day was Friday this year. The thought of Friday the thirteenth made Ludilo so angry he threw the calendar to the flames as well.

Amikino's funeral... when could that be kept then? Or was it even necessary to think anything like this? What was the success probability of the fellow's surviving in the avalanche incident? Did the captain send the medics to the feet of Amikamurdinto? Could there be many redeemers trying to dig up the bodies right now? Did Beleta have a chance of rescuing Ludilo and Amikino instead of Ludilo only? Could Beleta survive then if even Amikino, a great genius and "brother" to our hero, died out there? What comes to the lady's VSCP infection? Only time would tell.

As thinking these kinds of things desperately, Ludilo remembered something that might at least help his girl to survive: Amikino had mentioned a scientist called doctor Medikamento during the rail journey. So if this person had a chance to cure vampires and he worked at the University of Polurourbo, should it not be the best to travel to him as soon as possible? If Beleta only could get to the right place at the right time, there would be some light in the end of this foolish road.

The big problem though was that the couple was completely lost. Of course Ludilo had a compass and a tiny map of Glaciourbo but so what? In the yesterday's dangerous situation Beleta had led the couple to a random, unknown place that was miles away from Amikamurdinto. Thus, Ludilo had

absolutely no idea if they were even outside of the area that the map was presenting. Besides, the map did not show a place called "Amikamurdinto".

Peono now actually started to regret leaving IVEO. If he still had been a member, he could easily have called help right now, a helicopter for example. Why did the EX-sergeant not ask a single helicopter from the captain when he still had a tiny chance? Now it was no more possible when the angry phone call had concluded with a strong will of quitting the job as a hunter. The man could at least have told the captain that the couple was lost and miles away from Amikamurdinto. Now everyone thought that the abdicated man was still where he was originally ordered to go. So even if someone wanted to search for Ludilo, no one could find him nor Beleta.

After throwing the final hay into the campfire for the last time, our exhausted protagonist went to wake up his beloved one. After all, the best option right now was to continue walking at least somewhere and stop being a sitting duck. Even when choosing a random way, it was more likely to end up in coming back to Polurourbo. Besides, what was the point of crying over spilt milk in a smoky hay barn?

"Wake up, babe... We gotta go at least somewhere so we... Hey! What's wrong?" said Ludilo when he realized the woman was just lying and hardly even keeping her eyes open. Was she having some kind of seizure? At least she was not dead because she still clearly breathed and mumbled something. Something like "the end is near".

"So the damn virus has got that far: paralysis!" shouted the man. "Try to hang in there... I... I'll get you to Medikamento. You know... you might have been thinking that Turmento or whatever Oruto's boss is the only one who could save you... but there's another person! At the University of Polurourbo, there's a doc called Medikamento and he's managed to create a cure against the VSCP pandemic. But the problem is... How on earth are we gonna get back to Polurourbo? I mean we're lost and... hmm..."

Ludilo took up his old phone. Because the emergency does not read law or pride or anything, it was better to just ask help from the hunters. Or was it? Captain Ĉevalo now knew about Beleta so even if the hunters came to help, they would just kill her. After all, they were vampire hunters who were looking for money they get by killing the likes of Beleta.

Then how about 911? Or could calling that number be wise either? The rescue men would probably find out there were real vampires among the human society which would cause a huge hullabaloo. The IVEO hunters would also take part in the game and come to the hospital. Then that would be the end of the line anyway.

Right when Ludilo was about to take the risk, in other words to really call 911, he realized a weird icon on the phone's screen. The same icon probably had always been on the screen for ages but this time it completely stole the man's attention. Why? Because it was an icon with a "GPS" text. Ludilo now

began to be an optimist and believed that his phone had a Global Positioning System application.

"Oh, thank God! Can this be true?!" rejoiced Ludilo so loudly that some snot flew out of his nose. "This phone has a PGS or whatever thing. Did you hear, Beleta?! Now all I gotta do is to get this thing working. I wonder if that's difficult. Now lemme see..."

The cold-fingered man kept pressing the buttons and the screen like a madman, hoping to find something useful in the menus. Where could the GPS application be? In the settings? Office? Messages? Options? Tools maybe? Even though the temperature was almost zero Fahrenheit degrees, our tech-genius was sweating now. If the former sergeant could not find the program and make the GPS working soon, Beleta would die for sure. Ludilo began to regret that he did not ever learn to use his own phone. What kind of idiot had he been all this time?

Anyway, after many minutes and even more swear words the man actually found the right option. Launching the GPS application was like a holy miracle. The man still did not understand how he succeeded to find what he was looking for but... Well, there was still one problem left: how do you use this application? Ludilo got at least that the map should zoom out somehow. But how? Was there a zooming button among all the weird icons? Where?

"Let me... I can still... move my arms..." wheezed half-paralyzed Beleta. The phone was handed over to her, and after two or three taps and slides, everything was clear. Ludilo understood now that in order to get to the railway station, the couple should travel only about three miles. The direction was south-west. Mister Peono did not want to waste any time so he went out to give Beleta a piggyback ride. He did not even extinguish the campfire.

On the couple’s way to the railway station, it was very dark. So dark that the man could not think about much more than his fear and the low time. How much time would it take if he had this current, semi-fast walking speed? Forty minutes and they would arrive the station, perhaps? Then six hours and they would arrive the city of Polurourbo. Then after that, twenty minutes and it would be over. They would be at the university hospital whatsoever place. So, if the train only could leave right when they arrive, and the station and doctor Medikamento would not have vacation or anything, the answer is seven hours. Only seven hours and then Beleta would be safe. She would be ok again, at least sleeping in a bed.

And so, the walking, or rather carrying, had begun. At first, Ludilo felt cold and carrying the woman was not a challenge at all. Then after ten minutes, it all turned upside down. The lady felt heavy like a reindeer and Ludilo was sweating. What sucked even more was that the man sometimes literally got some bloody hair color on his neck. Of course, vomiting was always an accident. Thus, it was not clever to make a mountain out of a molehill and start complaining.

"Sorry again", apologized the weak vampire with a wheezy voice.

"Don’t be sorry", was the carrier’s comment. "Oh, damn Turmento! What was he thinking? To make that kind of viruses like VSCP... if he really even caused this... and then how about Oruto? Just why… why’s he accepted the doc as his boss? That Nikima is a joke! He’s a pathetic dog!"

"I agree... and Ludilo... I love you. Do you promise me to always remember it?"

"Meh… um... sure! I love you too, you know..."

"Good, good... you know... I will die soon..."

"No you won’t! Stop telling me bullshit like that! Don’t you dare to give up! If everything goes as I think, this won’t take even seven hours. Come on! What could possibly go wrong? I’ll take you to that Medikamento and he’ll cure you. Then later we gotta think how we’re gonna make this pandemic stop once and for all. Finally, everything’ll be ok and we can live in peace!"

"No... This really is the end... Forgive me... Soon, I will be fully paralyzed... and I... feel so thirsty."

"You haven't drunk anything lately? You really should have something to drink since you've vomited so often but... I don't have anything but..."

Ludilo put Beleta down in front of a spruce and rolled up the sleeves of his left hand. He moved his bend of the arm in front of the vampire’s mouth. It took seven "drink now" compulsions before the woman finally allowed herself to drink human blood. The canine teeth bite felt a little painful but it did not take long. Mostly the goose bumps were because of the freezing weather.

"Enough... thank you", said the lady after five minutes. She drank enough blood, it seemed like. "My scarf... tie it... your arm..."

"You sure had enough?" asked Ludilo. After hearing a short yes-gesture, he took the lady’s black scarf and tied it into his arm. Finally, he straightened his sleeves, had a look at the GPS and continued carrying.

The freezing wind got even worse. It was a very blizzardy weather in the area. Even though the solarium lamp usually enlightened fine in all weathers, now it was quite impossible to clearly see wherever the way was taking its vagabond. The fingers that were holding the lamp always felt like icicles and the man had to change the lamp hand regularly to prevent finger frostbites. What was still worse, Beleta kept vomiting blood to the neck. The iron juice she just had did not stay inside.

Ludilo watched the GPS again and again, so he could ensure the lovers were going to the right direction. Only half miles left. Soon the couple would be finding out when the next train was about to go to Polurourbo. Soon the couple would be in a warmer place. Soon, just soon…

"Shall you... put me... down?" asked the woman as she cried blood and coughed very badly. "I am afraid it... it is time to say goodbye... Sorry I led you... into this..."

Ludilo put her down and answered: "You did not lead... what do you mean? Don't be sorry! Hang on! There's only a little distance left. I promise it'll be soon when we are ho..."

He could not finish the last sentence because Beleta grabbed him. She hugged with her last powers and kissed. The smooch was cold and blood-tasting but at the same time it was the warmest thing the man had felt for a while. The kiss made him forget the cold wind, freezing blizzard, yesterday's avalanche, even the death of the parents and everything, for a moment. How much time had it been since these two last had kissed each other anyway?

Beleta suddenly felt completely lethargic. She was unconscious and very near the death what Ludilo had feared all this time. Thus, Ludilo did not waste any more time and rushed to the railway station. He was hoping that the Lady Luck would lead the vampire's soul to the rose decorated way of guardian angels instead of the horrible death's gate. There was still hope...

Chapter eleven
The trap

At the destination, our blood necked hero was surprised by the fact there were not any railway stations nearby. There was a temple, a same kind of temple Ludilo had seen in his nightmare. The only difference was that now it was an arctic climate instead of a tropical one. So what did this all mean? Did the man choose a wrong walking direction? Impossible!

The EX-sergeant swept some snow off a stony seat and set unconscious Beleta laying on it. He also put his lamp down for a while so he could “fool around” with his phone. According to the GPS, the railway station should really have been at this point. But come on! There were not any trains or rails to see anywhere. Because Ludilo was sure he did not choose a wrong way, there were only two possible options to explain this. And after all, Beleta also had agreed with the navigating direction so…

The first explanation was that the GPS had somehow got buggy in this freezing weather and that was why the direction had been displayed wrong. The second, more likely one was that perhaps Beleta “lied” to Ludilo. Maybe she wanted the man to visit this ice temple instead of the station. But why? Did the lady just get crazy? Was this some kind of trap? Could there be lots of those child vampires behind a corner like in the nightmare? Was the purpose that an important mission must first be completed here before returning to Polurourbo? What should the hippie do? It was a shame that the unconscious partner could not give any hints or answers right now. Anyway, the fact was that either Beleta Damo or the buggy GPS had leaded Ludilo to a wrong place.

The exhausted man decided to take a more accurate look at this temple. He took up his gun since he was not sure if this place was peaceful. Someone might attack anytime. However, the equipped gun was pointless. The man realized there were no bullets left. They must have dropped away when Beleta carried him during the avalanche crisis. Ludilo then tried to take up his sword but that was a wasted effort also because the weapon had frozen in its sheath. The hippie pulled with his full powers but still he just could not even see an inch of the silvery edge.

The situation was like in the horrible dream. Ludilo was defenseless. The lamp seemed to be the most powerful weapon he had against vampires. But what could solarium light do in practice? It could only weaken or dazzle the blood suckers a bit. Hardly even a mosquito would die by the lamp and it could be much more effective to throw the lamp to vampire’s face.

Getting to the point, Ludilo decided to take a more accurate look at the temple. He soon found an interesting door. It seemed like an old elevator that would go underground. At the top of the door, the next text was written: "Dr. L. Turmento". Maybe now everything started to make sense. So, did the lady

want to visit this doctor she had mentioned before and cure herself here? But why did she not tell Ludilo straightly? What was the actual purpose of all this?

The door seemed to have a fingerprint lock. At least it looked exactly like that kind of device used at some of IVEO's top secret doors. Mister Peono decided to take a great risk. He put his gloves off and pressed the finger sensor screen. A little red error light was displayed for a while. The light vanished and it was silence. So the man's fingerprint just did not allow him to go inside but that was actually what even Ludilo should have understood right from the start. Were there any reasons to get surprised?

If Ludilo's fingerprint was not accepted, then what if Beleta's fingerprint could allow the couple pass? After all, was not the lady Oruto's, a servant of Turmento's, ex-girlfriend? It would be pretty sure that her fingerprints had at least once been registered to the system's data base. Well, there was only one and the bravest way to find out…

While taking the girl in front of the elevator door, our EX-sergeant really hoped that the lady's fingerprint would allow the couple to go inside and the doctor really was in this place. First of all, they would not need to travel to Polurourbo and wait hours in order to cure Beleta. Second, it was ridiculously cold outside.

Thank God that the green light finally saved everything and the door opened. Soon, because there was only one floor to choose, the lovers were going to the underground floor. The elevator was frighteningly narrow so Ludilo had to take a good, tight hold on his unconscious beloved one. Else, her clothes or even skin might have rubbed towards the stony wall.

When the elevator finally stopped, its door opened and the man pointed out there was a completely unexpected person in front of him. Ludilo was about to go back to the upper floor but that was an impossible idea. Mostly because that so-called unexpected person locked the elevator systems via a remote controller but also because Beleta's illness could finally be cured down here. There was no turning back, in the name of love.

"Lord Turmento! Miss Damo has arrived! Shall we begin the spinal cord treatment?!" shouted the bald-headed, hook-nosed, spectacled, mustached Oruto Nikima who was wearing a dark-blue kimono. "And you, Peono boy... have walked right into my trap!"

"What the...?" wondered Ludilo as he saw also that Oruto had a Colt gun.

"Hands up and put her down carefully right now! Why's she unconscious by the way? Have you manhandled my Beleta, you bastard?!"

"Damn, man! I'd never hurt Beleta!" convinced Ludilo and put the lady down like the enemy's stinky orders said. "More likely this is because of your lord… that Turmento guy! Isn't he who created the virus in the first place? Is he here anyway?"

"Yes and I must remark you that I, the great Doctor of Theology and Medical Sciences Lunatiko Turmento, did not create the virus to cause sorrow among human beings. The holy pandemic will save mankind from the total destruction that vampires are about to cause!" said a voice behind a corner. Then a long, white-clothed, grey-bearded, high-foreheaded scientist appeared. The person was like a cyborg and seemed to have lost his left ear completely. His skin was as grey as his beard and this doctor also had some sort of visual camera device that replaced the eyes. The guy did not look human at all but he must have been one.

"So you're that Turmento", said Ludilo. "I've heard you can cure Beleta. Well, doc… you gotta hurry and start working right now!"

"Don't you dare to give orders to my lord!!" shouted Oruto and gave a pair of missed gunshots only for scaring our hero. The scaring was successful since Ludilo's heart started to beat like a funky, mad monkey in front of drums. The echoes of the shot sounds were still banging in the ears.

"Oh please calm down, dear Oruto", said Turmento with his gentle voice. "Keep in mind that the person we invited only wants the same as you do: that Miss Damo will survive. Will it be okay if I now go to do my treatment and let you play twosome?"

"Wait a sec! You invited me here? You were expecting me to c'mere? What's going on?!" wondered our hero.

"Just have a look at this", said Turmento while he removed a bracelet from Beleta's delicate hand. How could Ludilo not have noticed the thing earlier? Had he become blind?

"A couple of days ago, Oruto set this silver bomb to the lady's hand", explained the scientist. "Plus, this bracelet bomb is also a microphone and thus we were allowed to eavesdrop you all this time. Thanks to this invention, Oruto succeeded to make Miss Damo do what she would not have wanted. She attracted you here, Mister Peono, to play with us."

"So that must've been why she leaded me here… If she had told me this place is a trappy temple, you would've just made her explode with a bloody bang! You're the ones who forced Beleta lie this is a railway station and a way leading to home? You dickheads made Beleta to come here in the first place! Because of you, she's been suffering in this fucking freezing Glaciourbo!"

"Something like that… But what even I do not understand is why Oruto insisted on getting you, Mister Peono, here. If I was him, I would have just let the avalanche kill you and only forced Miss Damo to come here to cure herself."

"This whole thing is about pure honor", said Oruto. "I let my Beleta rescue the Peono boy from the avalanche situation since I wanted to take care of this Peono myself. I want a raw man-to-man fight with this ridiculous hippie!"

"But what about your stepbro then, huh?!" asked Ludilo in a very angry way. "Amikino was the one you let die but I, who you've got nothing to do with, had to be saved with all cost? You always protect only those you happen to hate?! Is it hate that makes you save people momentarily, bastard?"

"Why would I care about Amikino Turo in the first place? He's not my actual relative even though everyone thinks so. I have a little secret… a secret that even Beleta didn't know about. And that might be revealed if we two fight, Peono boy! After all, you were Amikino's loyal fighting partner… or sort of!" explained Oruto, put down his Colt and took up a katana. "Anyway, what are you waiting for? Shall you draw your saber or give up? Now be a man and show me what you've got! Show it so I can enjoy killing you in a bloody battle. En garde! Or what do you western people say, usually?"

"I right now use to say >>Cut a'la katana can't make yar banana harden nuff', hahaha!>>" shouted Ludilo as he quickly pulled his silvery sword out of the frozen sheath with full power. The ice slivers just flew all around to the stony floor and sparkled like crystals for a moment. "You've done it! That's it! But I'll let ya know this: when I start to rumble with this weapon, you're so dog food! If you're idiotic enough to challenge me, fine! Get killed by me then!"

"I guess I will now go to my personal lab room to treat Miss Damo", decided Turmento. "The one of you who does not get eliminated can probably take those cleaning items over there and kindly clean all your blood stains. Try not to make this place all dirty! I would mind having gnome ear pieces and clone's eye pierces on my quite expensive carpets."

After the scientist had vanished, a violent man-to-man fencing match started. At first Ludilo was about to lose easily since Oruto had vampire's speed and muscle powers. But the man hanged in there even though it was impossible to get a good chance to attack back. It was all blocking the enemy's slashes that kept our hero alive. Ludilo could not do anything else but take some steps back, keep sweating and try to predict Oruto's next moves.

The swords had clattered for over five minutes and the men had moved to a library room almost without even noticing it. Our EX-sergeant had hurt his left hand and that reminded him about one accident that happened years ago. Back at then, Amikino was training fencing with Ludilo and had made his special lunge attack which accidently hurt the hippie's left hand. Now it was a kind of same situation. It seemed like Oruto's fencing skills were the same as Amikino's. Especially that special lunge move was the same. Could it be that… that…?

All of a sudden the opponent decided to strike with a huge rush. Thank God Ludilo managed to dodge the attack and Oruto crashed into a bookshelf. The careless enemy did not stand up for a while and Ludilo too was almost about

to faint. The books were dropping all over the place and the hippie almost got one on his bloody, sweaty back of the neck.

"I know… what you are!" said the man as he gasped and almost dropped his saber. "Those lunges… those battle shouts… that nose of yours… dark eyes… face and… Didn't Turmento mention something about clone's eyes? So you really aren't a relative to Amikino! You're Amikino's fucking clone!"

Chapter twelve
End of the pain’s sermon

It was insane but the truth is always the truth, no matter how vranjoed. The enemy was not only a bald, mustached, Japanese-like vampire. He was also a clone of Amikino Turo. Or could it be that our hero just had a sort of schizophrenia? No… the opponent sure was a clone. Could Amikino also have been a vampire? Probably not. Someone has been pulling ropes behind the scenes.

Ludilo removed Beleta’s scarf from his arm since it had loosened so much it could soon drop down anyway. He also began to think a couple of questions while keeping up his guards. Oruto could get up from the pile of books anytime and give it another rush-dash-attack.

How could this be possible? Did even Amikino know about this truth? In the train, he had at least said he does not know anyone called Turmento, right? But how could this scientist have made a copy of the perfectionist hunter so that no memories remained in the victim’s head? Did Amikino simply keep all this as a secret and lie that he knows nothing? But come on! He was not that kind of type who would lie to Ludilo, his friend.

And what about Oruto then? He sure was one sterilized vampire asshole nerd who did nothing but licked Turmento’s ass and stalked random hags. For what purpose did Turmento create this clone anyway? For what purpose did Oruto accept to serve the doctor? All these questions blew Ludilo’s head up so our EX-sergeant decided to stop thinking about this madness for a moment.

But right when he finally managed to get rid of all insane ideas, the scientist came to the room to explain things. "This Mister Peono is not as stupid as you claimed him to be, my dear Oruto", he sermonized but the babbling had just begun. "Your friend found out surprisingly soon that I created you with the DNA of Amikino Turo years ago. God himself ordered me to make the holy vampire from human meat and for this purpose, I needed just the right type of deoxyribonucleic acid. There were many Jehovah Witnesses, Orthodox, Laestadians, priests and all kind of holy people in Mister Turo’s family. That is why a chose Amikino to be the uninformed chosen one for my purposes. It was not easy to get what I wanted but finally I succeeded with my research and edited Turo’s memory so that not even he nowadays could remember about what happened back then. Mister Turo truly believed that my Oruto was his stepbrother and all that… The most difficult part was to find every single relative of Mister Turo and edit their memories so that they had always known Oruto. However, finally my plan was ready to proceed further. I had the holy vampire king and the next step was to eliminate all *satanic* vampires. Earth does not need them, only my creation of the chosen one is needed! But this part is still ongoing and needs a greater

boost… No worries though! I have Oruto, the king of vampires and not even my holiest holy VSCP can defeat him! God bless Oruto Nikima! The first… and the last… angel-like vampire who will help the holy pandemic to spread. He as the New Messiah will serve our great God unlike all other vampires who are only worthless, *satanic* scums!"

"The last?!" wondered Oruto as he crawled under the bookshelf. He stood up and tried to take up his gun but it had been lost somewhere. "So you're not making Beleta my queen?! But you… you promised me to allow Beleta as well…!"

"Oh, my Oruto", said Turmento with an apologizing voice. "I have got some bad news for you. You see, this Miss Damo…"

"Didn't we clearly make a deal that I shall lose my balls in order to make you treat Beleta with that spinal cord treatment thing?! I have fulfilled my part and now it's your turn, right? I mean what else do you still want from me, my lord?"

"Oh, I want nothing. What I am trying to say is that Miss Damo is… she is already dead. Mostly because of the virus infection. There is nothing else that could have killed her, I'm afraid. Sorry but there is nothing I can do. It is too late. You know… even an exorcist and a scientist like me cannot resurrect anyone who is clearly dead. I cannot control souls like I would want."

Now both Oruto and Ludilo were so shocked that they both kneed down a bit. It was like the karma of the fallen people would have just forced them to do so. It felt like lifting chemical lead. Everything was much more depressing than just bad karma. The bloody fencing battle turned out to be totally worthless because the most beautiful lady was gone.

"You… you… and that fucking virus of yours…" stammered Oruto. He was crying red tears and walking closer to the scientist. "That pandemic of yours killed Beleta! You killed her!!"

"O-oh do not put it t-that way", said the scientist while taking a couple of back steps. "I would not think it like that. It was only a tragic accident that happened. I have not done anything wrong, have I? I at least looked Miss Damo…"

"That's enough bullshit! Come on! I have done so… so many sacrifices in your name and is this how you thank me? Can't even save a single soul for me, huh?! I've even eviscerated my testicles!"

"But my dear Oruto… They should have been eviscerated anyway because sexuality or even a potential of sexuality is a serious sin. All humans and especially vampires are inseminated with the original sin as you do know well. And if there is even a single sin in the soul of man, there is no possibility of getting to the God's mercy…"

"Cut the crap out, you motherfucker!" yelled the blue-clothed slave of this mad scientist while lifting his katana. "You've wanted nothing else but to

make me suffer! You just enjoy it when people make sacrifices for you."

"That is not so! Now put away that sword and listen carefully… You have always served me well and I do give you what you really deserve. You should just wait for the right time. So many golden years of serving me… and is this what you are fine with: throwing everything away? All this noise because of one single woman? Do you still even want to be the Vampire King Messiah, Oruto? Keep in mind at least that it was that Peono who caused Miss Damo to pass away! He was simply too slow. If he only could have been even a second earl-"

"Perhaps this is Ludilo's fault but don't you dare to call yourself innocent! You remember who created the VSCP in the first place, huh?! Now… heh… Ludilo… you… when I have finished off this doc, you will be the next to die!"

After Oruto had quit this pretty aggressive, confusing talking, he immediately struck Turmento right to his front of neck with the katana blade. Some of the bristles of the scientist's grey beard were cut like yarns by scissors. But too bad everything did not still go like the slave clone had planned.

It all happened so fast. The katana was cut into pieces and some of its blade parts almost hit Ludilo's face when they flew off. Then Turmento lifted Oruto and threw him through a bookshelf. It must have hurt since the wooden shelf parts made so loud noises. Not to mention, Oruto's screaming was horrible. But it was not only his screaming going on because some vampires appeared behind the bookshelf and they also were very loud. Perhaps it was a room behind the furniture? Anyway, these blood suckers must have been Turmento's slaves too like Oruto. The only difference was probably that they had suffered even more. Our protagonist bet the doctor had used the vampires in various horrible, scientific tests.

"Ha!! Did you seriously think that you could kill me like I was a regular human being? Did you think that I never increased my powers up to vampires' strength level? Or did you think that you could tell your lord how to live with a so-called high sense of justice of yours?" asked Turmento with a very negative-like voice. Then he continued: "Attention, my dear guinea pig vampires! I, the Doctor of Medical Sciences and Theology, Lunatiko Turmento, will cure and let free anyone of you who manages to cut betrayer Oruto Nikima's head off! But try not to destroy his brains because I need brains to proceed with my VMND project! Well? What are you waiting for? Attack!"

Then it was a huge mess going on in the secret room behind the bookshelf. Everyone was trying to kill Oruto and that caused a lot of annoying noise. Meanwhile, the mad scientist just laughed like an autistic donkey and returned to his lab. Ludilo now had to make a decision: should he save his pathetic "arch nemesis" Nikima in the name of a true hero or should he rather

follow the scientist and put an end to his plans once and for all? Or was it better to just get out? No… that would have been a coward's move.

The words "Get outta here, Peono! I opened the lift lock so just get out and save yourself!" could be heard among all that noise. But even if that was Oruto trying to really help the hippie, Ludilo had no plans of escaping. Like said, that would have been a coward's move, right? The protagonist just took his saber and ran to the lab where the doc was smirking in an evil way.

"Well, well", said the doctor while petting his grey, half-cut beard with his wrinkled hands. "I had never guessed that you would stay here for this long. What's even more ridiculous, I had never guessed that my own vampire king creation would be enough stupid to opposite me, his own creator! Can you imagine, Mister Peono? At first Oruto wanted you here so he could fight you but now all of a sudden he wants you to escape and save yourself. What a joke! And the most ridiculous thing here is that Oruto betrayed me because of a single death of a sinful woman!"

"Just what the hell is moving in your mind in general?" asked Ludilo and tried to slash the doctor with his silvery sword. Too bad Turmento dodged easily. Ludilo then tried to make this scientist understand what he actually meant with the question. "I mean… At first ya do some viruses and a clone… or clones? Then you claim that what you do is holy and only the best for mankind. But you can't see how you make people like Beleta suffer. Now I understand why she didn't see you in a good light and even refused to accept your treatment. You're just sick! Tell me what's your point with all this! Spreading a pandemic and playing with cells… and even religion."

"I am not sick. I am just so genius that the likes of you can never understand me at any level. You are just a low-educated, foolish, non-scientific young man! I have had so, so much research on vampires all over the world, you know? I have examined every race: cold-blooded, warm-blooded, flavuses, African black sickle-cell eaters and so on… I strongly believe in my knowledge and have made the decision to extinguish the vampires for humanity's welfare and the great God with all costs. Do you understand that the God himself has given me my great brains so I could do this favor to him? This favor of making the world a better place to live in the name of the Holy Trinity! The point is to perform holy methods to kill each one of the Satan's servants. And in order to really kill those mongrels, I created the VSCP, spread it all over the world and watched… I looked at those miserable vampires getting killed one by one, little by little… I watched how the God's will was finally becoming true."

"Oh God dammit with you! Seriously! You seriously think these pale-faced creatures are sort of devils? Guess what? You're wrong! Beleta for example was a gold-hearted person who could never, ever have drunk human blood. She must've lived with animal blood or something…"

"Oh really?" asked Turmento and when Ludilo slashed again, the doctor

dodged this another sword attack as well. "According to the bracelet's microphone I made, she drank your blood just about half an hour ago, Mister Peono."

"But that's a different thing, man! She was dying and I forced her to drink since I thought that would've saved her life!"

"Mister Peono! When will you stop that ridiculous vampire supporting? Do you not realize that Miss Damo spoiled your life as a hunter sergeant? Because of her, you started to believe that the blood suckers are good which is not true at all. Because of her, you quit your amazing job as a hunter! Miss Damo made you mad."

"That madness is called love!"

"Come on! That sinful vamp wanted nothing but your dick and blood!"

Now the hippie almost cut the scientist's right ear off. Too bad the sword did not even touch the opponent though, however, Ludilo shouted out loudly: "Don't you damn asshole talk about things you don't even know anything about! You didn't know Beleta!!"

"Oh but I still know very well what kind of souls do females have in general. Women are idiots just like Eve and they listen to all kind of serpents and other things that lead them to the dark way of sins. They are more likely than men to end up doing actions against the God's will. Have you ever thought why they have menstruations and puerperal pains and all that…? Because they are God's punishments! Just think about the first book of Moses 3:16. In the Old Testament it is said that…"

"Fuck you! Just do yourself a favor and kill yourself! I'd not wanna make my sword dirty of your blood!"

"Oh my… calm down! And do you really think you can beat me with that saber of yours? Some sarcasm you have! But what was I going to say…? Oh! I was trying to tell you about Virgin Mary and the Old Testament. There is only this one woman who is much higher than any cherub or seraph in the heaven. Virgin Mary gave birth to the Son of God and guess what, Mister Peono? I created Oruto Nikima, the VSCP-immune Vampire King, when I was inspirited by this holy woman. God's will is that there is one white sheep among the vampires. He was supposed to be the one who was higher than all the others of his nature just like Virgin Mary is higher than any woman on Earth… but a *satanic* shame has happened when Oruto betrayed me!"

"Cut it out already!! If you're a man, you should leave Oruto and the others alone right now and begin to make medicine against that sanctimonious pandemic of yours!"

"Fu fu fu… no-one is going to be let just alone… and even medicine you say, huh? No, no… I have completely other plans. The next step is the Vampire Mirror Neuron Disintegrator project since the Vampire Spinal Cord Paralyzer appears to be too curable. Once I manage to… wha… what do you think you are doing with that lamp?"

Ludilo had got a great idea: he pointed his solarium lamp right at Turmento's sight device so that the doctor could not see anything for a while. Then our protagonist knew that his next saber attack could not be predicted and so he slashed hard. He slashed the device completely broken and thus, the scientist was blind now. Only the electrical sparks were flying around as the doctor screamed.

"You scum! What did you do to my eyes, Peono? I am blind!!" yelled the scientist in a total panic while running around. He was trying to catch Ludilo and choke him with his ugly, grey hands. "You will pay this! You really will and with your damned soul! You heathen! *Satanist*!!"

Ludilo took Beleta's corpse with him as he finally realized to escape. The body would be important when keeping the funeral for the lady and quiet escaping just turned out to be the best option in our hero's current situation. On the way to the lift, the hippie saw a noisy vampire group with Oruto's bald, bloody head in their hands. So that Nikima also had died in all this mess…

"Alright… here's the head, lord Turmento! Please cure me and let me be free!"

"Fuck you! I was the one who did all the work. You didn't do anything!"

"No! It was I. I should get the honor, not you two!"

"Imbeciles! Can't you see how I clearly did that all? I even have children to take care of so I should survive!"

"Shut up!!!" screamed Turmento and almost cried. "Who cares about the head?! Go and get that Peono! I want that damn Peono to be killed immediately!! No one of you gets a treatment nor anything else! Can you not see that I am blind?!"

"What? Isn't he gonna keep his promise?"

"Think it's time to pay back all that pain he's caused to us."

"Ya bet! He's also blind now so he's not a match at all now."

"Revenge! Revenge! Reeeveeengeeeaarrrgghh!!!"

Ludilo heard the scientist's final, terrible, echoing cry of pain as the lift started to go up. Even when the evil man had got what he deserved, our manly protagonist burst out crying. He could not help it. This Glaciourbo journey took too much on heart. If only there was some kind of time machine, Ludilo would fix many things in the past with its help.

On the surface, he admired the ongoing sunrise for a moment. Then he hugged Beleta's indolent body and decided to call IVEO hunters' helicopter to arrive. He needed help to get back to Polurourbo, that just had to be admitted. No matter what the others would think. Besides, this was truly the last call. They could not even do anything to Beleta since she was somewhere where pain, fear and threats did not exist.

Chapter thirteen
Five months later

It was April and the spring's warm sunlight was melting the white, dirty snow piles in Polurourbo. There appeared to be more and more pollen in the air, the first brimstone-butterflies were flying on the green meadows, the cool wind blew waving the wet grass a bit and the sounds of tiny birds could be heard here and there. In this quite beautiful spring weather, our upset Ludilo was walking to the graveyard via a muddy stomping. He felt like his deep sorrow was endless. But perhaps the sadness only showed how much the man loved his beloved girl after all, not to mention the others that had passed away.

The phone rang just when Ludilo was about to power it off and pass the graveyard's metallic gates. The man decided to answer since the caller was his new boss. Soon the hippie was talking with a grey-haired, round-cheeked, spectacled doctor, who was nothing like that Turmento though.

"Oh hi! It's me, Medikamento! We need to talk about one thing. You've got five minutes?"

"Nope… I'm at the graveyard now. I wanna be in silence and think about my beloved one."

"Oh, sorry! Well, I'll call you later tonight. Then you'll hear about Timema, Grioto and the other new poor patients. Bye!"

"Yeah, bye…"

Nowadays, Ludilo worked in a secret Vampire Healthcare and Research Center, VHaRCe, which was located at the University of Polurourbo. The organization's main goal was currently to treat as many VSCP patients as possible. The EX-hunter had passed a quick, three month educational physiology studies program and got an assistant's job from the medical science doctor Ĉies Medikamento, since it was a huge labor shortage going on. And Ludilo took this job very seriously but even more important to him were these emotional graveyard visiting moments.

After a couple of minutes, the hippie had arrived where he was going to. He put four little rose bunches each in front of its own gravestone. These stones were Beleta's, Ludilo's mother's, Ludilo's father's and Amikino's. The last grave did not have a corpse underground though. Sergeant Turo's body was never found after the avalanche and thus everyone of course just assumed him to be dead.

Ludilo stood there for a while and mumbled the Lord's Prayer quietly. The words "*your will be done, on earth as in heaven*" reminded him of Turmento's thoughts about the God's will… vampires getting killed one by one… a little by little… But come on! That could not be the real will of this world's creator whatsoever. The mad scientist must have taken the Christianity too seriously, if this can be said. He must have forgotten the

meaning of love as he was doing all kinds of research in his lab. However, if it somehow turned out that Turmento was right with his ideologies, Ludilo would decide to become an atheist immediately.

All kinds of religious stuff had always interested Ludilo a lot though. But he never took a closer professional's look at them, not even at the Christianity. What was very interesting in almost every religion anyway was that they each strongly believed to be the only right religion. In other words, they believed that they only could have exactly the right theories of living after death, the world's originality, the God and all other that kind of stuff. However, it was clearly impossible for them all to be correct at the same time. Thus, the religions used to fight each other and many wars were caused in order to extinguish "the wrong God's servants" and "heresy".

But what was the actual point in all this mess? It just reminded of what that Turmento was doing. Why would anyone support their own religion so badly that the faith caused painful conflicts? Is it an impossible idea if the mankind would not be like that insane scientist in Glaciourbo? Everything should stay in its own limits, even religions. Where were all the lenient people nowadays? Where were the ones who always accepted if someone was just different? Besides, how could any god or whatever be a sadistic monster who you have to believe in with violence in order to avoid hell? Why to call other people Theistic Satanists if they do not believe in the same as you? And why should vampires be afraid of humans and keep avoiding them like Jewish people in Nazi-Germany? Could there finally be a peaceful era in the future? An era when vampires and humans could walk hand in hand without being afraid of any fools who want to separate them with sanctimonious pandemics… yeah! That world would so be what Ludilo will fight for from now on.

But even now when Turmento was gone, which truly was a good thing, our hippie considered the Glaciourbo trip as a farce. It was like playing chess blindly, without seeing any consequences. In the game, Ludilo was like a pawn and Beleta was like the queen. The avalanche instead was like a fork where either Amikino or Ludilo had to get captured. There was no way the queen could have saved them both… not that queens ever should have the savior's role. But in this game, the queen saved a single pawn and got captured herself. Anyway, in this situation, the pawn could still have moved to the last line and made the queen return to the game. But no, poor Ludilo-pawn was too slow. That toy-boy failed.

If only he had taken two steps at the start, in other words if he had somehow averted Beleta from coming to Glaciourbo, most of the things could be fine now. The place was a deadly trap that took many precious lives: a genius, a clone and a beautiful lady… not to mention: an old scientist, innocent vampires and brave hunters, but Turmento was not really precious though. However, there is no way to fix these details now and Ludilo knew that.

So, religions and chess were interesting things to the EX-sergeant. But there was a third interest too and that was premonitions. Ludilo did not clearly remember the vampire child nightmare he saw before but still, he remembered how the dream had at least had a temple representing that Glaciourbo's temple. It must have been a mysterious premonition and the fact had completely changed the man's attitudes about dreaming in bed. Some months ago, the hippie still did not really believe in premonitions' existence but nowadays Ludilo had even borrowed some books that contained interesting knowledge about those dreams. Too bad Beleta worked no more in that library where the books were lent though… her place at the library of Polurourbo had been taken by some ugly, mean, angry person.

Anyway, Ludilo would forever remember each of his moments with Beleta. Especially the first kiss at the library and the last kiss at Glaciourbo. The life-changes between these two moments were radical to the man but even crueler to the lady. Ludilo would sure have wanted to spend more time with his beloved one but...

After the man had been at the graveyard for about fifteen minutes, he looked up to the skies and spoke: "Oruto… sorry about stigmatizing you as a pathetic nerd. Even if you were so fucking annoying sometimes… and even if you were just a clone, you were a good man after all. Think I'll make a gravestone for ya someday. Just take care of Beleta wherever you are. And Beleta… sorry. I couldn't save you and we spent so little time together. Thanks for saving me from that avalanche and opening my eyes and all that… I'll always love ya. And Amikino… I think you were an underrated genius who didn't deserve death. You deserved much better. Sorry I didn't admit you Beleta was a vampire when we were talking in front of the campfire. I should've been able to tell you so your eyes could have opened too. You had so much accuracy… you really saw Beleta in the snowy bushes when I didn't even believe she was following us – right, man? Thank ya for telling me about Medikamento and listening to me always when I needed a good pal. And mom and dad… vampires killed ya but I can't be naïve and hate the vamps forever because of that. Hope you understand I'm helping Medikamento to cure those creatures because I don't want anyone, not even vampires, to suffer. Everyone… rest in peace!"

After these epic words, our green-eyed Ludilo Peono swept off his tears with the sleeve of his black jacket. He turned around and left the graveyard without watching back. His dark ponytail waved like a hero's cape as he decided to go on. Sure he would return the graveyard in the name of honor and great memories but that would be another day. For now, he just let fair wind to control him.

When the man had walked hundreds of feet, he stopped and had a look at the playground nearby. There were some children who were playing with a colorful kite. The happy seeing made our hero think that life is like a kite

flying in the winds of fate. Sometimes you get high, sometimes you get low. Sometimes the wind blows north, sometimes the wind blows south… well, it blows where it wants to. It can also change its blowing direction in a second and cause trouble. Sometimes the wind is gusty and cold, sometimes it is mild and warm. Finally, there are times when it does not blow at all and the kite falls down.

THE END